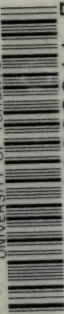


MUSHROOM TOWN

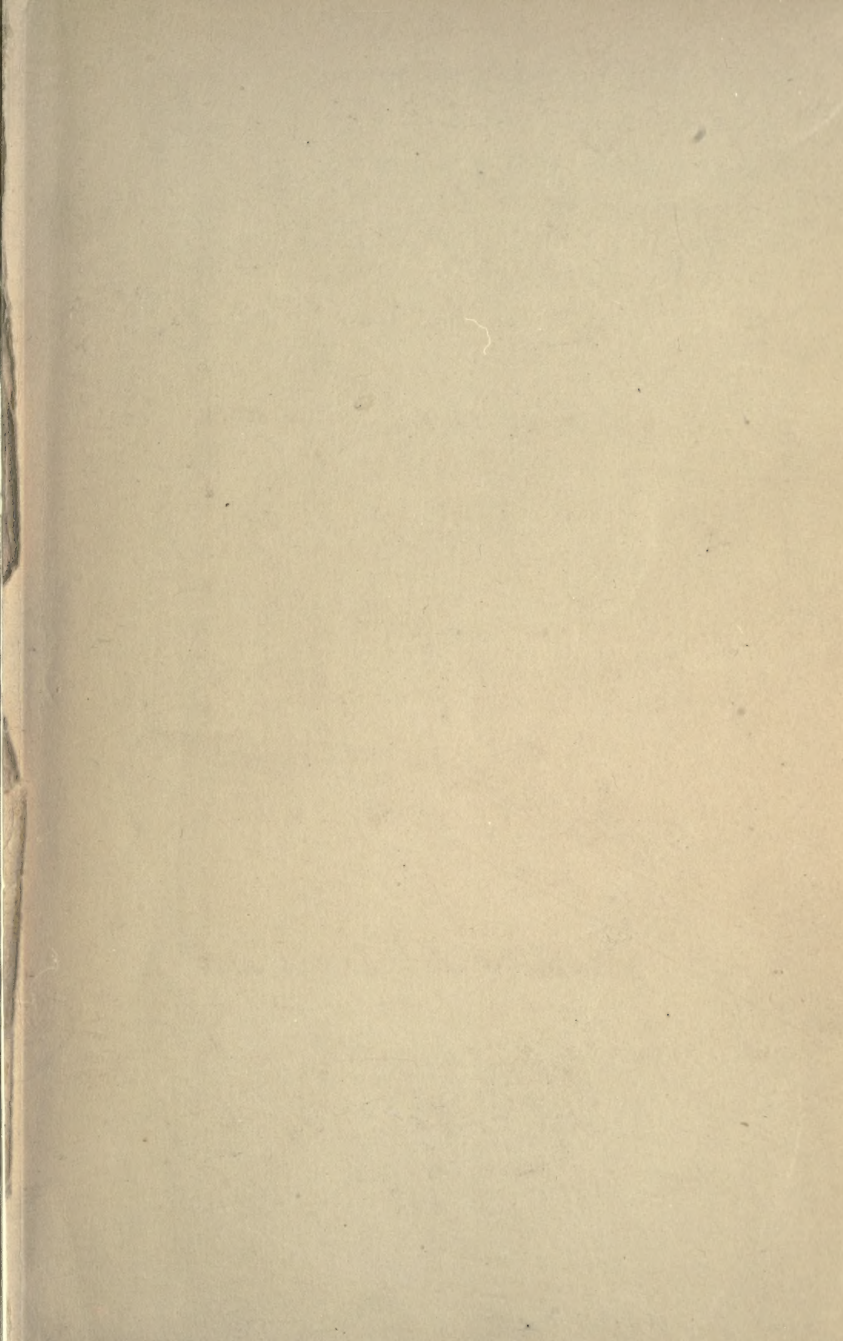
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MUSHROOM TOWN

OLIVER ONIONS

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MUSHROOM TOWN

BY

OLIVER ONIONS

Author of "Gray Youth," "In Accordance with the
Evidence," "Debit Account," etc., etc.

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DEDICATION

IN the following pages I have permitted myself to take a number of liberties—geographical, historical, etymological, and even geological—with a country for which I have conceived a strong affection; I trust I have taken none with its beauty nor with its hospitality. It will be useless to search for Llanyglo on any map. It is neither in North Carnarvonshire, in Merioneth, nor in Lleyn. Of certain features of existing places I have made a composite, which is the “MUSHROOM TOWN” of this book.

The kindnesses I have received in Wales during the past six years have been innumerable; indeed, much of my work has consisted of writing down (and not always improving) things told me by one of my hosts. For this and other reasons I should like to render him such acknowledgment as a Dedication may express. “MUSHROOM TOWN” is therefore inscribed, in gratitude and affection, to

ARTHUR ASHLEY RUCK

Hampstead, 1914

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THE INVITATION

“**W**E’LL take the little cable-tram, if you like, but it’s not far to walk — twenty minutes or so — the Trwyn’s seven hundred feet high. You’ll see the whole of the town from the top. The sun will have made the grass a little slippery, but there are paths everywhere; the sheep began them, and then the visitors wore them bare. And we shall get the breeze. . . .

“ There you are: Llanyglo. You see it from up here almost as the gulls and razorbills see it. The bay’s a fine curve, isn’t it? — rather like a strongly blown kite-string; and the Promenade’s nearly two miles long. But as you see, the town doesn’t go very far back. From the Imperial there to the railway station and the gasometers at the back isn’t much more than half a mile; the town seems to press down to the front just as the horses draw the bathing-vans down to the tide. Shall we sit down? Here’s a boulder. It’s chipped all over with initials, of course; so are the benches, and even the turf; but you’d wonder that there was a bit of wood or stone or turf left at all if you saw the crowds that come here when the Wakes are on. It’s odd that you should never see anybody actually cutting them. Some of them must have taken an hour or two with a hammer and chisel, but I’ve been up here countless times and never seen anybody at it yet.

“ Yes, that’s Llanyglo; but look at the mountains first.

This isn't the best time of the day for seeing them; the morning or the evening's the best time; the sun isn't far enough round yet. But sometimes, when the light's just right, they start out into folds and wrinkles almost as quickly as you could snap your fingers — it's quite dramatic. Foels and Moels and Pens and Mynedds, look — half the North Cambrian Range. You couldn't have a better centre for motor-cycle and char-à-banc tours than Llanyglo. . . . Then on the other side's the sea. That's only a tinny sort of glitter just now, but you should see the moon rise over it. People come out from the concerts on the pier-head just to have a look. . . .

“The Pier looks tiny from up here? Yes, but it's three furlongs long for all that, and those two tart-tin-looking things at the end hold nearly a thousand people apiece. But, as you say, it is rather like one of those children's toy railways they sell on the stalls in Gardd Street for sixpence-halfpenny. And that always strikes me as rather a curious thing about Llanyglo. It's a big place now — nine thousand winter population; but somehow it has a smaller look than it had when it was just a score of cottages, all put together not much bigger than the Kursaal Gardens there. I don't know why the cottages should have seemed more in scale with the mountains than all this, but they did. I suppose it was because they didn't set up for anything, like the Kursaal and the Majestic and the Imperial. . . . But it doesn't do to tell the Llanyglo folk that. They look at it in quite another way. To them the sea and the mountains are so many adjuncts, something they can turn into money by dipping people at sixpence a time and motoring them round at four-and-sixpence the tour. . . . And sometimes you can't help

thinking that it wouldn't take very much (a wind a bit stronger than usual or an extra heave of the sea, say) and all these hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of stone and iron and paint and gilding would just disappear — be sponged out like the castles and hoof-marks on the sands when the tide comes in — or like a made-up face when you wipe the carmine and pencilling from it. . . . Eh? — No, I'm not saying they've spoiled the place — nor yet that they haven't. You mustn't come here if you want a couple of miles of beach to yourself. It all depends how you look at it. If Llanyglo's cheapjack in one way, perhaps it isn't in another. It's merely that I remember it as it used to be. . . .

“ Would it surprise you to learn that the whole place is only about thirty years old? That's all. It grew like a mushroom; there are people who were born here who don't know their way about their own town. . . . Mostly Welsh? Oh dear no, not by any means. I should say about half-and-half. I suppose you're thinking of the Welsh names of the streets? They don't mean very much. There's Gardd Street, for instance; 'gardd' is only the Welsh for 'garden,' and Edward Garden, John Willie Garden's father, built the greater part of it (for that matter, he built the greater part of Llanyglo). And if anybody called Wood (say) had put up a house here, he'd probably have called it 'Ty Coed.' And some of it, of course, is genuine Welsh. The Porth Neigr Road does go to Porth Neigr, and Sarn, over there, has always been Sarn. But people think they're getting better value for their money if they come away for a fortnight and see foreign names everywhere; they've a travelled sort of feeling; so they give the streets these names, and

print all the placards in two columns, with 'Rhybudd' on one side and 'Notice' on the other.

"And that's given rise to one rather amusing little mistake. As you know, this headland that we're on is called the Trwyn, and 'trwyn' simply means a nose or a promontory. But over past the Lighthouse there, there are the remains of an old Dinas, a British camp, and half these Lancashire trippers think the headland's called after that — 't'ruin' — 'th' ruin' — you know how they talk. . . .

"I'm interested in the place for several reasons (not money ones, I'm sorry to say). For one thing, I like to watch the Welsh and Lancashire folk together; that's been very amusing. And then, it's not often you get the chance of seeing a whole development quite so concisely epitomised as we've had it here. Llanyglo started from practically nothing, and it's grown to this before John Willie Garden has a single grey hair on his head (though, to be sure, that cow-slip colour doesn't show grey very much). Then there's that curious essence — I don't know what you call it — the thing a town would still keep even though you cleared every brick away and built it all over again, and sent every inhabitant packing and re-peopled it. There's a field for speculation there, too, though perhaps not a very profitable one. But most of all I've been interested in seeing what various sets of people have given Llanyglo, and what it's given to them in return — how the stones and the people have taken colour from one another, if you understand me, and what colour — in fact (if it doesn't sound a little pompous) in Llanyglo as an expression of the life of our time. It's sometimes hard to believe that something almost human hasn't got into its stone and paint and

mortar. The whole place, as it's spread out down there now — two-mile line of front, houses, hotels, railway, gasometers and all — has had almost a personal birth, and adolescence, and growing-pains, and sown its wild oats, and has its things that it tells and its things that it doesn't tell, in an extraordinary way — or else, as I say, it seems extraordinary, because you get it all into a single focus. There may even be a bit of me in Llanyglo. If you came half a dozen times there'd be a bit of you too.

“I should like you to meet John Willie Garden. He's the man to go to if you want to know anything about these streets and hotels and the seaside and the stations on the front. Why not come to the Kursaal, on the Terrace, at about nine to-night? — Good. He's a capital chap; a Something or other on the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, adopted Conservative Free Trade candidate for his division (but a Protectionist in other countries) and probably worth a quarter of a million, a good deal of it out of Llanyglo. Not bad for a little turned forty, eh? He'll probably ask you to dinner. You can't see his house from here; it stands back from Gardd Street. It was the first house to go up in Llanyglo — no, I'm forgetting. There was one before it — just one before it, not counting the original cottages, of course. . . .

“What do you say to a turn? We've time to have a look at the Dinas before we go down. . . .

“It's British, and the *Sixpenny Guide* will tell you all that's known about it — possibly more. Its foundations are said to have been sprinkled with the blood of Merlin. What's left of it's certainly sprinkled with these everlasting initials. The Trwyn Light's just behind, two reds and a white, and they're experimenting

with the Rocket Apparatus, but I don't think that will come to much.— There's little Porth Neigr, look — and that point thirty miles away's Abercelyn. . . .

“ Now the mountains are beginning to show; there they are — Delyn on the left, then Moel Eryr, then Mynedd Mawr. That's Penyffestyn, with the great cavity in his side, and his shadow's right across Bwlch. . . . Yes, very fine, and a perfect evening for it. The posters at Euston don't overstate it, do they? Of course, you've seen that very familiar one, of a Welsh Giantess, shawl, apron, steeple hat and all the lot, holding a view of Llanyglo in her arms? Pink hotels, indigo mountains and chrome-yellow sands. . . .

“ There's the *Queen of the Waters* coming in. If we wait a few minutes longer we shall see the town light up. Yes, electricity; the power-station was finished only last year; it's over there beyond the filter-beds; Llanyglo handles its own sewage. . . . Ah! There goes the Promenade lights; three jumps, and the two miles are lighted up from end to end; the kite-string's a necklace now; pretty, isn't it? . . . And there goes the Pier. . . . There'll be a glare behind us like a shout of light in a moment — the Trwyn Light. . . .

“ The mountains are dark now, but how the day lingers on the sea! To-night it's like ribbon-grass. . . . Hear the post-horns? Those are the chars-à-bancs coming in. The last tripper's running for the station now. . . . Now the light's dying on the sea; it's a new moon and a spring tide. Two or three riding-lights only — I say, it's solemn out there. . . . But they'll be dining at the Majestic presently. That long golden haze is Gardd Street, and that spangle at the end of it's

the New Bazaar. There goes the Big Wheel in the Kursaal Gardens, with its advertisement on it. We might look in at the Dancing Hall to-night; that's rather a sight. They have firework displays in the grounds, too, and last year there was one out in the bay; they put bombs and flares and serpents on rafts, and laid them from boats, like mines. That was in honour of the Investiture of the Prince of Wales. . . .

"We'd better take the tram down, I think; we might stumble and break our necks. . . .

"The other turnstile.—That kiosk place? That's the visitors' bureau. They'll tell you quite a number of useful things there — cab fares, porters' charges, time and tide tables, excursions and so on; but John Willie Garden can tell you more interesting things than those. Don't forget you're to meet him to-night. . . .

"You're sure you can't dine with me? Very well. The Kursaal, then, on the Terrace, at a quarter to nine. . . ."

PART ONE

I

THE YEAR DOT

ON a Friday afternoon in the June of the year 1880, a roomy old shandrydan, midway between a trap and a wagonette, moved slowly along the Porth Neigr and Llanyglo road. It had been built as a pair-horse vehicle for Squire Wynne, of Plas Neigr, but the door at the back of it now bore the words, "Royal Hotel, Porth Neigr," and its present or some intermediate owner had converted it to the use of a single horse. The shaky-kneed old brown animal at present between the shafts might have had a spirit-level inside him, so unerringly did he become aware when the road departed by as much as a fraction from the true horizontal. Taking the good with the bad, he was doing a fair five miles an hour. At each of its revolutions the off hind-wheel gave a dry squeak like a pair of boots that has not been paid for.

The day was warm, and hay was cutting. Combings of hay striped the hedges where the carts had passed, and as the Royal Hotel conveyance was so wide that it had to draw in in order to allow anything else to pass it, wisps had lodged also in the cords of the great pile of boxes and brown tin trunks that occupied the forward part of it. Honeysuckle tangled the hedge-tops; the wild roses were out below; and in the ditches the paler

scabious was of the colour of the sky, the deeper that of the mountains towards which the old horse lazily clop-clopped.

The pile of trunks in front hid the driver and the two print-skirted and black-jacketed young women who sat beside him from those inside the vehicle. These two young women were two of Mrs. Garden's domestics, and they travelled far more comfortably than did their mistress. Packed up by her bustle behind, on her right by her seven-years-old daughter who slept with her head on her shoulders, on her left by the angle of the trap, and in front by the hamper, the three or four straw basses, the cardboard boxes, the hold-all of sticks and umbrellas, with a travelling-rug thrown in (all of which articles she strove to balance on her short, steep lap), she could only perspire. Her husband, who sat opposite, could see no more of her than the top of her hen's-tail, lavender bonnet. Even this he shut out when he took up, now his newspaper (every line of which he had read twice), and now his daughter's *Little Folks* (for the inspection of which periodical, though the print was much bigger than that of the newspaper, he put on his gold-rimmed glasses). The smell of his excellent cigar mingled with the scents of the roses and hay, and trailed like an invisible wake a hundred yards behind.

John Willie Garden, who was eleven, had travelled half the distance from Porth Neigr on the step of the trap. During the rest of the time, now falling behind and now running on ahead, now up a champion-grown bank and again lying down flat to drink at a brook, he had covered as much distance as a dog that is taken out for a walk. He wore a navy blue jersey, which, when peeled off over his head, had the double effect of

wiping his short nose and causing his shock of gilded hair to stand up like flames, all in one movement. He carried a catapult in one hand. Both pockets of his moleskin knickers bulged with ammunition for this engine. In the heat of a catapult action, against hens or windows, he used his mouth as a magazine, discharging and loading again with great dexterity.— But, a mile or so back, his father, looking up over his paper, had called the Cease Firing. John Willie now plipped the catapult furtively, and without pebble. It was the chief drawback of the holiday from his point of view that it had to be taken in the company of his father. Among his brighter hopes was that Mr. Garden, having seen them installed, would return to Manchester on the Monday.

Mr. Garden was head of the firm of Garden, Scharf and Garden, spinners, and, to judge from his attire, he might have stepped straight from the exchange. His square-crowned billycock hat, buttoned-up pepper-and-salt grey suit, and crossover bird's-eye tie with the pebble pin in it, were at odds with the slumbrous lanes and the scabious-blue mountains. He carried a wooden-sticked, horn-handled umbrella, wrapped in a protecting sheath, and from his heavy gold watch-chain depended a cluster of little silver emblems that he would not have exchanged for as many Balas rubies. All Manchester knew that he could have given up the dogcart in which he drove daily to business, and set up a carriage and a pair of horses in its stead, any day it had pleased him; and his opinions and judgments, when he saw fit to utter them, were quoted. But he rarely uttered them. When asked for his advice, say upon a letter, he would adjust his glasses, read the letter slowly through, turn back and read it all over again more slowly still, and

then, when the person in difficulties was awaiting the weighty pronouncement, would look through the letter rapidly a third time, and at last, glancing over the top of his glasses, would mildly observe, "This seems to be a letter." Sometimes he would come to the very verge of committing himself by adding, "From So-and-So." The grey eyes that looked over those gold rims were remarkable. They seemed to serve less as appreciative organs of immediate vision than as passers-on of an infinite number of visual data, which would be accepted or rejected or laid for the present aside by some piece of mechanism hidden behind. He was forty-four, clean shaven, save for a pair of small mutton-chop whiskers already turning grey, darkish and rather delicate-looking, and only half the size of his stout, blonde wife. As long as Free Trade remained untouched, he had no politics, and he was an adherent of the lower forms of the Established Church. He was taking this journey on his daughter Minetta's account, who was not doing so well as she ought to be. He had bought a couple of the Llanyglo cottages, and judged that by this time they must be ready for occupation.

The mountains drew nearer, and other pale colours began to show through the scabious blue. The pile of luggage continued to brush the hedges, and the off wheel to creak. Minetta snored lightly as she slept, and the black legs that issued from her pink check frock, trimmed with crimson braid, swung slackly with every jolt of the cart. Mrs. Garden's face glistened; Mr. Garden allowed *Little Folks* to fall from his hand, and dozed; John Willie sought birds' nests and rabbits; and the old horse continued to change from lumpish trot to slow walk and from slow walk to lumpish trot, as if he had had a spirit-level inside him.

After this fashion the Gardens jogged along the lanes where to-day the summer dust never settles for touring-cars, motor-cycles and the Llanyglo motor chars-à-bancs.

“ John Willie! ”

It was five o'clock, and they had arrived. Leaving the cluster of three or four farms that formed the landward part of Llanyglo, they had turned through a gateless gap in a thymy earth-wall, and all save Mrs. Garden and Minetta had descended. The cart-track had become less and less distinct, and had finally lost itself altogether in deep, sandy drifts in which their approach made no noise. There was a fresher feel in the air.

And then, through a V in the sandhills, the sea had appeared, and the lazy crash of a breaker had been heard.

The irregular row of thatched cottages was set perhaps a hundred yards back from high-water mark, and the intervening space was a waste of sand, coarse tussocks, and the glaucous blue sea-holly. Half-overblown rubbish strewed the beach — rusty tin pans and kettles, old kedge anchors, corks, a mass of potato-parings in which three or four hens scratched, and the skeletons of a couple of disused boats. The half-dozen serviceable boats were gathered a couple of hundred yards away about a short wooden jetty. A mile away in the other direction rose the Trwyn, bronze with sunny heather and purple with airy shadow, with the lighthouse and the Dinas on the top. A small herd of black cattle had wandered slowly out to it, and was wandering slowly back again at the edge of the tide.

“ John Willie! ”

The cottages were thatched and claywashed, and while some of them had a couple of strides of garden in

front, others rose from little taluses of blown sand. Sand was everywhere. It lodged in the crevices, took the paint off the doors, and had blunted the angles of posts and palings until they were as smooth and rounded as the two or three ships' figure-heads that stood within them. Grey old oars leaned up in corners; umber nets, with cork floats like dangling fruit upon them, hung from hooks in the walls; and the squat chimneys had flat stones on the tops of them. The windows were provided with swing-back wooden shutters. Between the farming part and the fishing part of Llanyglo the family had passed three chapels.

“John Willie!”

Mrs. Garden had descended, and stood over her neat boot-tops in sand, wondering which of her cramped members it would be best to try to straighten first. Standing by her only half awake, Minetta rubbed her eyes. At a respectful distance, but a convenient nearness, half a dozen barefooted children described as it were rainbow-curves in the air with their hands from the foreheads downwards, and a little further away the maritime population of Llanyglo watched the Royal Hotel driver struggle with the luggage. They did not stand off from hostility, but from an excess of delicacy. Then, as a heavy trunk slipped and stuck, a young man with braces over his gansey gave a quick smile, started forward, and bore a hand.

“John — Willie!”

It was Mr. Garden who called. He had put his key into the door of the cottage where the house-leek grew like a turkey's neck on the claywashed gatepost, and he wanted John Willie to help carry in the smaller parcels. Now John Willie was neither deaf, nor did he feign deafness, but he had a fine sense of the

defensive uses of stupidity. Question him directly (say about those apples or that broken window-pane), and he knew nothing whatever. Question him further, and he knew less than nothing. You might conceivably have questioned him to the extreme point when his unadmitting blue eyes would have said, as plain as speech, "What is an apple?" His primrose head could be seen at this moment fifty yards away down the beach. He was watching a fisherman scrape hooks with an old clasp-knife. He had just spoken to the man. "*Dim Saesneg*," the man had replied. John Willie was now watching him, not as a man who scraped hooks, but as the possessor of a new and admirable defence against questions.

"John Wil ——"

But this time the summons was broken in two on Mr. Garden's lips. He had opened the cottage door, and was looking mildly within.

The orders he had given for the preparation of the double cottage for his wife and children had included the lining of the interior with match-boarding, and he had understood that this had been finished a week and more ago. It was a month since he had had the advice-note from the timber merchant at Porth Neigr that the material had been delivered. And so it had. There it was. There, too, were the walls. But the match-boarding was not on the walls. It lay, tongued and grooved, with the scantling for fixing it, just where the timber merchant's men had deposited it — on the floor. It filled half the place. On the top of it, still in the sacking in which they had been sewn, were the articles of furniture that had been brought from Mr. Garden's Manchester attics and lumber-rooms. The rest of the furniture he had taken over from the previous tenants, whom some

vicissitude of fortune had taken far away to South Wales.

Mr. Garden removed his glasses, wiped them, replaced them, and then, looking over the top of them, spoke:

“Where’s Dafydd Dafis?” he said.

But a cry from his wife, who had come up behind him, interrupted him. She fell back again, not mildly, but in consternation.

“Nay, nay, Edward! — I never ——” she gasped.

“Where’s Dafydd Dafis?” Mr. Garden asked again.

“Of all the sights! If it isn’t enough to — I thought you told me ——”

Mr. Garden blew his nose and slowly put his handkerchief away again.

“Does anybody know where Dafydd Dafis is?”

“— and us fit to drop for a cup of tea!” Mrs. Garden continued. “Up since five this morning, and come all that way, and not so much as a fire lighted nor a kettle on to boil ——”

Mr. Garden was looking about him again, as if he would have said, “These appear to be boards,” when suddenly his wife broke energetically in.

“Well, it’s no good standing looking at it; we must all turn to, that’s all.— Jane! Ellen! — Off with them jackets, and one of you make a fire while the other unpacks the groceries. The tea and things are in that box under the shawls — and to think we might have come in wet, and not even a winter-hedge to dry our things on! — There’s no wood, you say? Wood enough, marry! I can see nothing else! — And the tea isn’t there? Then run out and buy a quarter of a pound to be going on with; I won’t have everything unpacked now, not in the middle of this joiner’s shop! — Tell her where the grocer’s is, Edward ——”

And she threw off her lavender dolman and bonnet, and bustled about, like the capable creature she was, as ready to turn to as if she had never had a day's help in her life.

A little girl stood at the door, still describing rainbows from her forehead; but scarce had Ellen asked her where the grocer's was when there came up at a half run Howell Gruffydd himself, the keeper of the single shop of the place. He was in his shirt-sleeves, wore an old bowler hat, and wiped his hands on the coarse, white apron about his middle. Over his glasses Edward Garden watched his approach, but he did not speak. It was not anger that kept him silent. Already he had accepted *fait accompli* — or in this case *inaccompli*. Howell Gruffydd broke into sunny smiles of welcome.

“How d'you do, Mr. Garden? So you have arrived? How d'you do, madam? How d'you do, miss? You had a pless-sant journey?”

He beamed on each of them, and then beamed on them again.

“Do you know where Dafydd Dafis is?” Mr. Garden asked once more.

“Indeed I do not, Mr. Garden. Perhaps he maake fenss for Squire Wynne. Perhaps he fiss.”

Then Howell Gruffydd's eyes fell on the boards as if he had not noticed them before. He gave a heartfelt “Aw-w-w!”

“It is not finiss! Dear me, dear me! Hwhat a pitt-ty!” Then he became cheerfully explanatory. “That will be old Mrs. Pritchard — Dafydd Dafis he that fond of her as if she wass his own fless and blood. She iss nine-ty, and for two weeks they have prayers for her in the chap-pil, and Doctor Williams, he come from Porth Neigr, and that is five s'illing, but the pains

in her body was soa bad she not know hwhat to dooa! — And it was good fiss-ing these three weeks and more — and the man who bring the boards, he say they well season, but it do them no harm to wait a little while longer ——”

Mr. Garden’s eyes were still looking over his glasses.

“Then is he going to let them season for ever?” he said.

Howell Gruffydd smiled soothingly.—“Naw-w-w! Not for *ev-er*, Mr. Garden!”

“It’s a good job he hasn’t got to get his living in Manchester,” Mr. Garden observed.

At that Howell Gruffydd clasped his hands, as if he congratulated himself that an interesting rumour was confirmed.

“Indeed, now,” he said, “they do say that the pip-ple there is not the same as the pip-ple here!”

At this point Mrs. Garden’s voice was raised. She was on her knees by the boxes, and could not find the sugar for tea. At the word “tea,” Howell Gruffydd broke out with eager hospitality.

“Indeed it is cup of tea I came about,” he said. “I say to Mrs. Gruffydd, ‘They come all this way,’ I say, ‘and they will be want-ting cup of tea whatever.’ It is all ready . . . Eesaac Oliver!”—he called from the doorway—“run to your mother, and say we be there in one minnit! And do not answer me in Welss when there are pip-ple who do not understand it — where are your manners, indeed!” He turned to the new-comers again. “You s’all have cup of tea whatever, Mrs. Garden — it cost you noth-thing — and the young gentleman, he is down at the boats, but Eesaac Oliver s’all fetch him — come on ——”

Howell Gruffydd, the grocer, speaks rather better

English to-day than he spoke then, but there is no more quickness and keenness in his black-lashed light-blue eyes, and no more persuasiveness in his purring voice. To the half-unpacked boxes of provisions on the floor he did not drop an eye. He led the way past half a dozen cottages to the little shop with showcards and paper packages in the diminutive window. He showed them in and round the counter, lifting the old curtain that shut off the parlour from the public part of the shop. Blodwen, his wife, in a clean apron that showed the knife-edged creases of its ironing, was curtsying as if she did not know how to stop. The parlour communicated with the inner side of the counter, and behind the counter, on the left, was the window. Bottles and canisters stood on the shelves, and below them were innumerable small drawers. The fire-place had a high mantelpiece with countless china objects upon it, and a large dresser with blue and white plates stood against the inner wall. Next to the dresser was a tall clock, with a ship sailing round the world on the dial. A gigantic black turnip of a kettle sent out a cloud of steam; cranpogs were keeping hot in a dish within the fender; and near them an enormous marmalade-coloured cat slept. The room smelt of pepper and soap and pickles and cheese, and Howell Gruffydd's guests filled it. He helped his wife to wait upon them, and in the intervals attended to the shop. A little girl came in for a pennyworth of bicarbonate of soda, and Howell, returning from serving her, again showed his white, but false, teeth.

“It maake the tea last longer,” he said, with a jerk of his head; “but there is no bi ——” he smiled again apologetically, though he was perfectly well able to pronounce the word, “—there is none of that in this tea,

Mrs. Garden. It is not tea like the fine pip-ple in Manchester drink, but we are simple pip-ple here. Blodwen, the cranpogs; make a good tea, Mr. Garden; indeed, you eat noth-thing; tut, tut, they taake up no room! — You say what is that, young gentleman? That is a Welss Bible. Aha, you cannot read that! Nor you cannot say, ‘Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychyndrobwlantysiligogoch!’— You try? I say it slowly —”

Though Howell had repeated the jaw-breaker twenty times, John Willie Garden would still have maintained the silence of defence.

“Ha, ha, ha! It is easy! . . . Well, I ask you riddle instead.— There was a young gentleman, and he have eight”— he held up his fingers —“ eight — sisters. And every one of them has a brother. Now you tell me how many brothers and sisters there are!” He winked, but respectfully, at Mr. Garden.

“Nine,” said John Willie Garden contemptuously, with his mouth full of cranpogs and jam.

Howell showed no discomfiture. He laughed.

“Ha, ha, ha! He say nine! I ask him again.— There was a young gentleman . . . but, dear me, there is the s’op again! We must earn our living, all of us. Business before pleas-ure — it is a good rule —”

And he squeezed through to the counter again, while his wife boiled more eggs and spiked the cranpogs on a fork, five at a time.

After tea Mrs. Garden was seen to be pulling up her skirt and to be feeling for her pocket in the folds of her petticoat; but with an imperceptible gesture her husband restrained her. He thanked Gruffydds, and they returned to their own cottage, Eesaac Oliver accompanying them to help to pile up the matchboards and to take

the furniture from its sacking. The cottage was much like the other cottages of the place. Its ceiling consisted of tacked-up sheets, inside which spiders and dust and sand whispered and the wind rippled. The black mantelpiece had brass candlesticks and china ornaments, and on one side of the tall clock was a grocer's almanac-portrait of Mr. Gladstone, while on the other was one of Dr. Rees, the President of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. A sampler, rather difficult to see in the bad light, hung immediately within the door, and the window opened six inches, in which position it had to be propped with a short stick. There were geraniums on its sill, and a red sausage filled with sand kept out the draught when it was closed. The outer door of the second cottage was to be permanently fastened up when the match-boarding should be finished. The cottages adjoining belonged to fishermen, the one with a wife and children, the other a widower who kept his departed wife in mind by means of a number of framed and glazed cenotaphs, consisting of a black ground with white angels mourning over a tombstone, and, above, the words, "*Er Serchog Cof* —"

This was Llanyglo when Minetta Garden was first brought there for the benefit of her health. The authors of the Itineraries had not thought it worth mentioning; Wyndham has nothing to say about it, Skrine did not visit it, Pennant passes it by. But you may find an excellent steel engraving of it, by Copley Fielding, full of accomplishment, elegance and taste, and published by the London Art Union. If Minetta did well there, it was Edward Garden's intention, so far as Edward Garden's intentions were ever known, to let or sell his cottage and to build a more convenient house of his own. There was stone to be had in abundance within

three or four miles. Mutton was plentiful and delicious, beef not quite so plentiful nor quite so good. The larger grocery supplies could be sent direct from Manchester, the odds and ends purchased from Howell Gruffydd. Water was to fetch only a hundred yards, and lamp oil, etc., came twice a week in the cart from Porth Neigr. And soon — Edward Garden did not know yet, and if he did not know you may be sure nobody else did — Porth Neigr might be brought nearer to the rest of the world than ten miles' journey by road. For, besides being a spinner and a good many other things, Edward Garden was a Director of the Ratchet and Rawtonstall Railway, and, as is the compliment between railway and railway, those little silver trinkets that dangled from his gold watch-chain — little greyhounds and locomotives, winged orbs and other emblems of speed — were the tokens of his freedom at all times over other lines, and of his personal intimacy with men who open up land, not a field at a time with a plough, but by running a sinew of steel through it, with a nerve alongside that, touched at any point, quickens and thrills throughout its length.

Nevertheless, it is quite true that he came to Llanyglo first of all for the benefit of his daughter's health.

II

ITS NONAGE

AT bottom, neither the good fishing nor the illness of ancient Mrs. Pritchard had been the real cause of Dafydd Dafis's procrastination in the matter of the match-boarding — any more than those greased cartridges were the real cause of the Mutiny. He was merely vindicating the claims of a temperament that kept him, and would always keep him, poor, yet a power. He was a day-labourer, whom anybody could hire to build a wall, mend a thatch or caulk a boat; but — and this was the secret of his influence — he had a harp in his cottage. In a glorious baritone voice he sang *Mentra Gwen, Y Deryn Pur*, and lorn songs of love and wild songs of battle. More than that, he sang *penillion*; and as *penillion* — which is an extempore form of song into which you may plunge at any point you please, provided you finish pat and triumphant with the double bar — as *penillion* concerns itself mainly with two themes, namely, the loved mountains and lakes of Cambria, and quick and topical inventions of personal gossip, Dafydd Dafis held his hearers both by their deeper sentiments and their lighter foibles. He was a spare and roughly clad man of thirty, unmarried, with a kindling eye, a handsome nose, and a ragged dark moustache; and when his head was bowed by the side of his harp, all the life of him seemed to run out into the lean and roughened fingers on the strings.

He came to see Edward Garden about that match-

boarding on the Saturday morning, bringing a youth of eighteen with him. Edward Garden, who had had experience of the Welsh in Liverpool, which is the capital of Wales, received him with resignation. Fair and softly goes far in a day, and he knew that the luxury of chiding the bard of Llanyglo would prove a dear one did Mrs. Garden find her egg supply suddenly fail and the Llanyglo cows mysteriously cease to yield milk.

His forbearance was rewarded. Before he departed for Manchester on the Monday morning he had the satisfaction of seeing Dafydd Dafis and the youth actually begin the job. No doubt it would be finished by the time divinely appointed for its finishing.

But whether Dafydd Dafis sang much as he worked, or worked a little as he sang, remained an open question.

Now in whatever other respects Llanyglo may have changed, its air then was the same air that the Guide Book so justly praises to-day. Minetta felt the benefit of it at once. During her illness she had had her dark hair close-cropped; for fear of taking cold, she still wore a red "pirate" cap, that is, a cone of knitted wool with a bob at the peak that fell on one side of her head: and for the same reason she wore black stockings pulled well up over the bamboo-like joints of her bony knees. She was a slight, dark pixy of a child, on whom so much care had been expended that she had begun to care for herself and to talk wisely about draughts and wet feet; and sometimes she consoled herself for the loss of her hair by repeating her mother's assurance, that it would grow the more strongly afterwards.

But within a fortnight of the Gardens' settling at Llanyglo there was no further thought of taking her back home until the cold weather should come. Her

doll's-house and paint-box were sent for. Her health continued to improve. By and by she was to be found squatted down by the sand-blown palings, surrounded by the Llanyglo children, keeping a shop, of which the commodities were shells, pebbles, starfish and the like. Her dolls and their house were neglected. But the other little girls, who had seen these wonders once, sometimes lingered wistfully about Mrs. Garden's door, looking within, and whispering, "There it is, Gwladys — see, by the cloch —"

Long before the match-boarding of a single room was completed, John Willie Garden, whom at first his mother had not been able to drive out of doors, had lost interest in Dafydd Dafis, his sawing, his hammering, and his songs. He disappeared by the half-day together. It was a holiday time at the school by the Baptist Chapel, and, with Eesaac Oliver Gruffydd and other youngsters as his companions, he scrambled among the rocks at the base of the Trwyn, or climbed the headland itself, or digged for bait, or went out in the boats, or fished for crabs with split mussels off the jetty end (he stuffed his catch up underneath his blue jersey, where the animals crawled about on his friendly and naked skin). The rainbow curves of the children ceased when he or Minetta appeared, but they continued as a salute to Mrs. Garden. The weather continued superb: it rained scarcely at all. The mountains were never for two hours the same; the sea in the evenings was mother-of-pearl; and the rising moon seemed to stand up on it, like the lateen of a felucca of gold.

Mrs. Garden sent to Manchester for her tricycle.

Then the school by the Baptist Chapel re-opened, and for some days John Willie, hanging idly about and listening to the droning within, was undecided

whether to give the insulting cry of liberty or to lament that he was left to his own devices. He himself would not have to go back to school till the middle of September. Then he still further enlarged his circle of acquaintance. He attached himself to a farmer's lad, who shot rabbits of an evening among the sandhills, and, after being allowed to fire the gun, gave his catapult away to a "kid." July passed. The matchboarding progressed by fits and starts. It was now Minetta who impeded its progress. Dafydd Dafis loved her as if she had been his own child, and told her stories of dragons and knights and enchantments and fairies, and sang *Mentra Gwen* to her, all by the hour together, careless whether Edward Garden paid him for those same hours or not.

With the passing of August, Llanyglo had made far more difference to the Gardens than the Gardens had to Llanyglo. Indeed, Llanyglo looked like absorbing them altogether, as animals not ultimately capable of domestication are sucked back into the feral state. In the matter of dress, for example, they had deteriorated alarmingly. Half his days John Willie spent in and out of the water without a stitch on him, and he no longer had a pair of sand-shoes to his name.— And Minetta? First she lost the bob from the peak of her red "pirate" cap, and then the cap itself was cast aside. From careful nightly brushings of her "new" pleated navy-blue frock with the white braid, she allowed the pleats to get full of sand, and, where the prints of her ribbed soles had been, now her bare feet patterned the beach. Her bamboo legs were brown as seaweed and barked up the shins; and when (with a totally abandoned display of knickers) she emptied her shoes of sand, she would sit down in a pool as soon as not.— And

Mrs. Garden? Not for worlds would she have had anybody from Manchester see her as she returned on her tricycle from bathing among the Trwyn rocks, sessile on the saddle, a mackintosh over her voluminous bathing-dress, a towel cast across her shoulders, and her plump ivory legs rising and falling on the pedals like the twin cranks of a vertical human engine. Yes, the Gardens were slipping back into savagery. They were becoming part of Llanyglo. Manchester seemed, not so much a hundred miles, as a hundred years away.

And when, on a Monday morning, it became necessary that Mrs. Garden should put on her garments of civilisation again and traverse those hundred miles, or years, in order to see how her other home was getting on, the whole population gathered about the Royal Hotel shandrydan that came to take her to Porth Neigr, and tears stood in eyes, and sobs choked throats, and shawls and hands and handkerchiefs were waved as the vehicle started off over the muffing sandhills, and as many promises were made that Minetta and John Willie should be well looked after as if she had been departing never to return, instead of coming back again on the Friday. Howell Gruffydd picked a tear from his eye with his little finger, and spoke of the mutability of human affairs.

“The one is ta-a-ke, the other left,” he said. “It is all change. Dear dear, it make me think of my cousin. Evan Evans, of Carnarfon, and his three boys, as fine boys as ever you see, and so-a happy, all living under one roof, till Mary Evans die and wass buried, and the changes come, and where are those boys now? They are scatter. One is in Bangor, and one is in Menai Bridge, and one is in Pwllheli. Dear me! Dear me! Mrs. Garden was a very kind one. There was no

kinder 'ooman. Al-ways the sa-a-me. She seem like one of ourselves. Well, well ——”

And he picked away another tear, as grief-stricken as if he had been reciting an epitaph “*Er Serchog Cof Am Amelia Garden.*”

Then, when on the Friday she duly returned, there was as much rejoicing as if she had been a sister, come back again from a long wandering.

Mrs. Garden had brought back with her in the Royal Hotel conveyance wellnigh as much luggage as had laden the vehicle on their first coming; for it had been decided that Minetta's stay was to be still further prolonged. So warm clothing had been brought, and more blankets, and a screen for the door, and a small family medicine-chest, and Minetta's Compendium Box of Games. And that was bad news for John Willie Garden, for it brought the shadow of his own departure near; and yet it was good news too, for it seemed to promise a more sure establishment in the place, with perhaps another visit for himself during the Christmas holidays. He could not think how the summer days had slipped away, and grew doleful as he remembered how few of them now remained.

Then, when September was a week or so old, he climbed the Trwyn in order to take his good-bye look at Llanyglo.

A straggling row of cottages, a few paths over the sandhills, three Chapels, a school, and a few scattered farms: the rest, mountains, sea, and air. The tide was creaming over the short thumb of a jetty, and the herd of small black cows was patrolling the beach. Morgan's cottage, Roberts's cottage, their own cottage, not more than a dozen other cottages; and then Howell Gruffydd's shop: already the place was full of memories

for John Willie Garden. That wide pool in the sands that reflected the sky had not been there a fortnight before — for the sea had now lost its summer look, and it changed the configuration of the shore at night. A puff of low-blown smoke showed where Dafydd Dafis was giving a boat a coat of tar. There was the small crack of a gun — John Willie's friend was shooting rabbits. On the top of Mrs. Roberts's chimney a new flat stone had been placed, and a new staple for the shutter had been driven into the wall. John Willie had still no stockings on, but he was sensible now of the wind on his legs. They were as brown as rope. His hands too were brown and grimy, and smelt pleasant. That morning he had been helping the men to get in the winter peat. . . .

So he watched, and at tea-time he descended; but already he was making up the exultant tales he would tell the boys of his form, of the spanking place where his father had taken a cottage and might presently be building a house. He would boast over them in the Welsh words he had learned, and triumph no end that they did not understand him. Only to a few of his special friends would he confide the meanings of his expressions in English.

Three days later he was doing even so, at Pannal School, near Harrogate, in Yorkshire.

Mr. Garden came to Llanyglo once more, bringing a doctor with him this time in order that Minetta's health might be authoritatively reported upon, and again he departed. The cottages, which in summer had been places to live outside of, began to have a comfortable look as the afternoons drew in. Minetta wore her boots and stockings again now, and her maroon serge frock with the white collar, and Mrs. Garden put her tricycle

away in the little lean-to behind the house, smothering the bright parts with vaseline and covering it up with sacking. The last — the very last — piece of match-board had been nailed in its place, and all had been pale oak-varnished, so that the sheen of the fire could be seen in the walls. The glowing peats were reflected too, in still red spots, in the black glass rolling-pin, the brass candlesticks, the windows of the dolls' house, the plates and lustre jugs, and the china sitting hen where they kept the eggs. The wind began to hoot in the throat of the chimney. Mrs. Garden's ears became accustomed to the louder falling of the breakers; soon the cessation of this noise would have been the arresting thing. October wore on. There was very little fishing now. Each of the three Chapels had a week-night service, and nearly everybody went to all three. Twice the schoolroom was thrown open for concerts; but most of the singing took place in the kitchen. Sometimes, on the edge of the dark, a fantastic irregular shape would be seen, rising and dipping and lurching as it approached over the sandhills; it was Dafydd Dafis, carrying on his back the wooden case that contained his harp. Save for these infrequent diversions, the winter was a dead time at Llanyglo. The hamlet rolled itself up and hibernated. Mrs. Garden sometimes sighed for a Hallé concert, or a dance, or "a few friends in the evening," but she bore up for the sake of the dry and sunny and exhilarating days and the good they did Minetta. Minetta got out her dolls, their house, and the Compendium Box of Games; and she and Gwladys Roberts and Morwenna Morgan and Mary Price, with the oil lamp on the table and the firelight glowing low on the ceiling, had spring-cleanings of the mimic dwelling (to which the Welsh children did not take with any

great heartiness), and epidemics among the dolls (which were more interesting), and once a funeral (to which they gave themselves rapturously). They played Snap and Fishponds, and then Minetta set about the making of a picture screen, with coloured figures which she cut from the *Queen* and *Lady's Pictorial* and plain ones which she coloured with her paint-box.

At Christmas Mr. Garden and John Willie came down, the former for a few days, John Willie for a fortnight. One of his days Mr. Garden spent in a visit to Squire Wynne, who lived at the Plas, three miles away. The sea was some days as black as iron, on others as white as ash with the tumult of the wind. There was snow on the mountains, but little at Llanyglo. Even John Willie did not want to bathe. In the day-time he tried to rig up a sail on his mother's tricycle, so that he might coast along the two miles of beach before the wind; at night he often walked down to the edge of the dimly creaming water, and stood looking out into the blackness, or else at the Trwyn Light, two reds and a white.

Squire Wynne, the former owner of the Royal Hotel shandrydan, was the ground landlord of Llanyglo, and the reason of Edward Garden's Christmas call on him was — still quite simply and on Minetta's account — that he had decided to build and wanted certain land to build on. But this was not quite the simple matter it might have appeared to be. With this, that, and the other, the Squire floundered in a morass of mortgages, and, for the scraping together of his interest money, could scarce have re-papered the dilapidated walls of the Plas dining-room. He had other property also, thirty miles down the coast, which he had never the heart to go and see. It was there that the family for-

tunes had been sunk. A score of broken shaft-chimneys and heaps of fallen masonry on a promontory were all he had to show for the good Wynne money — these, and a deed-box full of scrip and warrants which you could have had for the price of the stamps on them. For that remote volcanic waste had been a happy hunting-ground for the prospectus-monger with hopeful views on paying quantities, and the Squire had granted more concessions than he could count. It was to be presumed that somebody had made money out of the concessions, if not out of the mines themselves. The last enterprise had been manganese.

“Let me pour you out a glass of port first; it’s the only thing I have that hasn’t some sort of a charge on it,” said the Squire. He was a heavy man of near sixty, the owner of a family pew in Porth Neigr Church, a stickler for rainbowing, and, in a feckless sort of way, something of an antiquary. His adherence to the three-bottle habit helped to make the fortunes of several quacks in our own day, who advertise infallible cures for the neuritis he and his kind have bequeathed to their descendants. The only sign the Squire himself showed of this was a slightly ochreous eye.—Then, when he had poured out the port, “It’s you who have the money nowadays,” he said, meaning by “you” Gladstonian Liberals. “Look at this ceiling of mine. There isn’t a ceiling in Wales with a finer coffering, but look at the state it’s in!—And that chandelier! It holds forty candles, but *I* can’t afford ’em! This is what *I* use.” He pointed to his father’s old reservoir colza lamp on the table.—“And I’ll show you the staircase presently. . . . Sell? It won’t make sixpence difference to me one way or the other. Which piece is it you want?”

Mr. Garden told him.

"Well, you'd better see my man about it. Sheard, Porth Neigr, next to the corn-chandler's shop. Or I'll see him if you like. But if we do come to terms I should like to give you a piece of advice."

"What is that?" Edward Garden asked.

"I suppose you're not Welsh by any chance?"

"No."

"Well, I'm half Welsh, and things jog on well enough as long as I'm alive. There are all sorts of questions that simply don't arise. But they're a queer people here, and when you get to the bottom of it, practically the question of landowning resolves itself into keeping on the right side of Dafydd Dafis, if you see what I mean." It was not necessary to tell Edward Garden that, but he begged the Squire to go on.

"For instance," the Squire continued, "I've a couple of mortgages foreclosing any time now — Sheard will tell you — I don't even know who the mortgagees are. But if they're Welsh, so much the better for them. I mean if they introduce changes, or go at things like a bull at a gate, they'll wish I'd gone on paying them interest. A smile does more than a smack here. If they inclose, for example ——"

"Ah, this new Act ——"

"Or any other Act. There was a case at that No Man's Land of mine over there ——" The Squire jerked his head in the direction of the shafts where the family fortunes had been sunk. "An Englishman came, and began to fence, and there was a Dafydd Dafis sort of fellow there, and this man Rodgers thought that because he wore strings round the knees of his corduroys he wasn't anybody of consequence . . . and there you are. The only thing Edward the First could do with

the bards was to destroy them, and they're the same breed yet.— So that's my advice. For the rest, you'd better see Sheard. Have another glass of port."

And, after he had been shown the magnificent ruin of a staircase, and had noted without showing the grass on the Squire's paths and the moss in the Squire's grass, Edward Garden thanked the Squire for his advice and took his leave. He was able to come to terms with Sheard, and in the following spring a new house began to go up in Llanyglo.

The site Edward Garden had selected for his house lay a little way behind the row of cottages, over the thatches of which it looked out to the sea. Rock cropped up there, amid a waste of bents and potentilla and sea-thrift and thyme, and a rill slipped over moss and, a little further on, disappeared into the sand, to emerge again down by the shore. From a stone quarry on the Porth Neigr road stone was still being got for the extension of Porth Neigr itself; and it would actually be nearer to bring it to Llanyglo. Sheard saw to that also, and Edward Garden, taking the Squire's advice, put Dafydd Dafis, match-boarder, in charge of the work. It would take time, but it would save time. And, so long as it was understood that it was Dafydd Dafis who might say to this man "Come," and he came, and to the other "Go," and he went, Edward Garden did not anticipate difficulties did he wish, later, to "stiffen" his supply of labour by importing a plumber, or a mason, or a carpenter or two from Manchester.

So, in the spring, the rock was cleared and chisels began to clink; and John Willie Garden, away at school in Pannal, could scarce contain himself until the summer holidays should come. He sent, by letter, the most peremptory specifications. His room was to be thus and

thus, and not otherwise. The letters also contained complaints to his mother that his health was seriously impaired by arduous study; so was the health of his friend Percy Briggs: indeed, all the fellows were remarking how greatly in need of a change of air he and Percy seemed. Mrs. Garden's chief preoccupation was that the new house should have water upstairs and a cupboard at every turn.

And as that was the first building of their own that the folk of Llanyglo had ever seen, its progress became their daily talk. The farmers came from inland to look at it, and, as the weather grew milder, the fishermen no longer smoked of an evening under the shelter of their boats down by the jetty, but instead made a kind of club-house of the triangular pile of floor-boards that the Porth Neigr timber merchant presently delivered. They climbed inside this slatted prism, hung the interstices with sacking as a protection from the wind, and smoked and talked, while the stars peeped down on them. They talked of progress and innovation, and of how little they had ever thought they would live to see such a change as this on the face of their sand-hills.

"But it will not be as big as the Plas, whatever," one of them would remark, not so much as belittling Edward Garden's new house as in order to correct a certain tendency to wild and disproportionate talk. Indeed, they were proud of Llanyglo's growth. Only the building of another chapel could have made them prouder.

"Aw-w-w, William Morgan, h-what a way to talk!" another would reply. "You talk like a great simpleton! You say next it is not so big as the railway station at Porth Neigr! Indeed, the Plas is big-ger, but it is di-lap-i-date, a pit-ty to see, and the stair-case — aw-w-w dear! They do say Squire Wynne he

go in lit-tle bedroom, not to fall through the floor!"

"And the stables is lock up, all but one stall, and you shan't find a handful of corn there, no, not more than will feed one horse!"

"There was sixteen horses there ——"

"And the Squire, he hunt ——"

"It all go to that Abercelyn in the mines — thousands of pounds! ——"

"There is land here to build stables if Mr. Garden wiss ——"

"Indeed, Hugh Roberts, if he build any more we be bigger than Porth Neigr, whatever! ——"

And this hyperbole always raised a laugh. Porth Neigr, besides being the head of the railway, had a market place, two banks, a stone quay, a court house, and an English Church.

The house rose higher and higher, and by the time John Willie Garden came again, in July, it had reached the first floor. Long rows of roof slates were stacked under a temporary shed, and, as if he had not had lessons enough in the school by the Baptist Chapel, Eesaac Oliver Gruffydd did multiplication sums and Welsh-English exercises upon them. John Willie's eyes danced when they saw the scaffolding and ladders. He was six rungs up a ladder before you could have turned round. He was up that ladder and down a second and up a third almost as quickly, nor did he take breath until, short of swarming up the scaffold-poles, he had stood on the topmost point of the structure. Then, with the air of something accomplished, he condescended to the level ground again.

Half of Dafydd Dafis's men lodged at one or other of the farms and cottages, to the tenants of which they were bound by ties of consanguinity; the others put up at the

little alehouse half a mile out on the Porth Neigr road, which served also as a shop for the outlying farms. Dafydd paid their wages, and they had built a hearth near the mortar heap for the cooking of their dinners. John Willie dined daily with them. Never was such importance as that with which he came nigh to bursting. The rocks and the rabbits, the boats and the Trwyn, no longer called him; here was not only a house going up, but his house. In his father's absence he could give orders. He became knowing in limes and mortars, expert in the use of the plumb and level. He strutted about with a square, setting it carelessly against angles, and derided Eesaac Oliver and his slates and long-division sums. The eaves-level was reached; they began to get the roof-timbers up; the sandhills resounded with hammering and sawing; and the upper part of the house began to resemble a toast-rack against the sky. Only one stone remained to be set in position. This was the gable-stone with "E. G., 1882" upon it. John Willie warned Eesaac Oliver that the slates on which he ciphered would soon be required.

As matters turned out, he was wrong in this. Already three men, a plumber, his mate, and a carpenter, had been down from Manchester, and fresh supplies of timber — sections of staircase and so on — had come in carts over the sound-deadening sandhills. But how all at once the work came to a sudden stop — how that toast-rack stood against the sky for another year without a slate upon it — and how Edward Garden, away in Manchester, had once more to accept the line of least resistance, while his son loitered disconsolately about the unfinished building until something even more exciting claimed his interest — to tell these things another chapter had better be begun.

III

THE MINDER

THE land on which, as Squire Wynne had told Edward Garden, other mortgages were being foreclosed, began a furlong or so behind the unfinished house, reaching to and including one of the farms — Fotty, John Pritchard's. It formed a three-hundred-yards-wide strip of bents and rough grazing, which spread out inland with Fotty in the middle of its base. The mortgagee was Squire Wynne's Liverpool wine-merchant, and he had accepted the mortgage partly because he did not wish to be at cross-purposes with such of Squire Wynne's friends as were good customers of his, and partly because he was not very likely to get anything else in settlement of a longish account. This account had been reckoned off the sum advanced, which, besides, was based on a low valuation; and, not wanting the land himself, he was ready enough to sell to any optimist who did.

The land remained in the possession of the wine-merchant for exactly eleven weeks. At the end of that time he had found his optimist in the person of Terry Armfield.

And who was Terry Armfield, that his affairs should thus become mixed up with those of Llanyglo?

Well, the name of one of his grandfathers, which need not be mentioned, is to be found, in certain circumstances of notoriety, in Gomer Williams's *History of*

the Liverpool Privateers; and that of his father is associated with the bright story of the tea-clippers. Thus a certain adventurousness in Terry may perhaps be accounted for. But whence the rest of him derived was a mystery. Belated young Tractarians who burn incense in their monastic bedrooms were no more common in Liverpool then than they are to-day. In appearance, Terry was an ill-adjusted compromise between an ascetic and a young man about town. He was tall and of a buoyant movement, excellently dressed, had burning and ecstatic brown eyes, and was possessed of an extraordinary power of impressing people as long as, and even a little longer than, he was actually in their presence. This was all very well as long as he spoke only of pictures that this self-made merchant ought to buy, or of books without which some shipper's newly formed library would be incomplete. He really knew a little about these things, as also he did about architecture and engravings, vestments and Ritualism and furniture. The trouble began when he went beyond them. Wealthy business men, looking up as Terry lounged into their offices, would put up their hands defensively, cry, "It's no good, Terry — I won't listen," but would presently find themselves listening none the less. It was not that Terry was plausible. Plausible was not the word. He persuaded you only because he was, for the time being, overwhelmingly persuaded himself. His capacity for enthusiasm was astonishing. Circumstances having driven him from his true vocation (the Church) into business, he traded as it were under Letters of Marque that had had an apostolic blessing. House-property, leases, patents, picture-exhibitions, concessions, bills for discount, Irish-harvester agencies, philanthropy on a paying basis,

and a hundred even vaguer values — some idealistic strain in Terry so moved the dullard-on-the-make that he had a new light on business as a benison, and on money-making as something nobler than he had supposed. What such an one commonly lacked, Terry was full and running over with; and the end of the matter frequently was that it was judged to be worth a certain amount of risk to be on the side of Terry and the angels.

Of course, Terry ought to have been locked up as a public danger. Anybody but Terry would have been locked up. But you cannot lock innocence and rapturous good faith up. Terry, if you had locked him up, would merely have sent for his crucifix, plunged into fresh scheming, and would have come out again as running over with piracies and the humanities as ever.

So Terry Armfield, who hitherto had never heard of Llanglo and of whom Llanglo had never heard, took over Fotty and the strip of land that ran down to Edward Garden's unfinished house, with, as it happened, extremely notable results.

For nobody who knew Terry ever supposed that he made purchases of real estate solely upon his own account. He represented others; and it is perhaps significant that the nickname by which he was known among the members of the Syndicate which made use of him was borrowed from the slang of the "swell mob." He was called "The Minder."

Now the Minder, as you ought not to know, is the gentleman who makes himself charming to you while the others consult about how much you may be worth, and how you may most conveniently be made worth less. Often, like Terry, he himself is not in the real councils of his allies. They want his looks, his candours, his

repute, his address, and in Terry's case they especially wanted his powers remarkable of persuasion. Until it should be decided what people were to be persuaded of, Terry minded.

Little did John Pritchard, tenant-farmer of Fotty, dream of the solicitude with which his farm was regarded by a number of people who had never seen it and did not want ever to see it. Little did he think that that middling oat-bearing land was being minded and brooded upon. Little did he imagine what interest, what benevolence, what affectionate regard . . . or, to put it in plain English, he had no notion whatever that, instead of having Squire Wynne for a landlord, he was now the tenant of a set of prospectus-vendors of whom two or three were the same men who had held those hopeful views on the paying-quantities of manganese that could be obtained from that other property of Squire Wynne's, the Abercelyn mines, thirty miles further down the coast.

The Corporation did not insist on manganese or on anything else. On the contrary, it was accommodating in the extreme. You paid your money and took your choice what commodity you found on its properties; you could have had tin, iron, copper, lead, anything you happened to fancy. It merely wished to be able to show, in case of need, its indefeasible title to real land, at Llanyglo or anywhere else, but the further from civilisation the better. It would be safer, and really not much dearer, to buy Pritchard's farm, than it would be to have to confess in open Court that the tin or iron or lead shares of which it was trying to create the value, unfortunately happened to have Pritchard's farm sitting on the top of them.

“No, we'd better get hold of a bit of real land from

somewhere," the Syndicate had said. "Better have it in a new name too. All Abercelyn names exempt for three years. Who is there? . . . What about Armfield?"

All had agreed that Terry would make an excellent Minder.

When, in course of time, the Syndicate first heard from Terry (who heard it goodness knows where) that "glo" was the Welsh word for "coal," it was on the point of plumping for coal without further question.

"What more do you want?" it asked itself. "'Glo'—'coal'; there you are. Place-name. Awful lot in a genuine place-name. Find it on an old map, to show that we didn't invent it, and the whole thing settles itself. There's bound to *be* coal. Sure to be. They didn't call it that for nothing. All ground's got *something* in it. *I* say coal. On the face of it. It seems to me Providential. (Shut up, Abercelyn; we're talking about Llanyglo now.) . . . Who says coal, then?" . . .

But Llanyglo was not destined to be a colliery village. Latticed shaft-heads were not to rise under the Trwyn, nor men to descend in cages to the galleries deep under the sandhills. Edward Garden's house was not to become a mine-manager's residence, nor a coal-quay to be constructed where the wooden jetty stuck out like a stumpy thumb into the sea.—Nevertheless, it almost looked at one time as if it might have been so.

The Syndicate's registered offices were within a hundred yards of Lime Street Station, and Terry, looking forth from an upper window, could see the august portico of St. George's Hall and the cabs and steam-trams running to and fro past it. He sat day by day at a high sloping desk, perched on a tall stool. A small pile of

letters lay by his side, weighted with a surveyor's reel-tape, and on a shelf above the press with the dumb-bell arm, thrust among directories and files, were *Stones of Venice* and *The Christian Year*. There was a green cardboard shade on the double-elbowed gas-bracket, and on the wall near it hung an ebony-edged T-square and a number of French curves. There was a second stool for callers, and in a small outer office a youth of sixteen read *The Boys of London and New York* and chewed root-liquorice. The place was shabby, as befitted a hole-in-corner enterprise, but Terry saw not that shabbiness. He had splendour enough in his own visions. He did not look very busy, but he was. A dozen inspired and half-baked schemes fermented in his head, and besides these, he was minding Llanyglo — the thyme and wild pansies and butterflies of its sandhills, the glaucous blue sea-holly of its shore, its heathery Trwyn, its coal or what-not underfoot, and its crystal air overhead — especially its crystal air overhead. . . .

IV

“DIM SAESNEG”

ON the forenoon of that day on which work on Edward Garden's house suddenly ceased, Dafydd Dafis, sitting astride of a coping, was singing as he drove heavy cut nails into a beam. His song was martial, and it almost made his joinering warlike. The burden of it was that Cambria's foes (here a bang with the hammer) should fall beneath the sword (another bang) as the pine falls when the levin (bang) flashes from the cloud that hides the head of Arenig (bang, and a nail well home). John Willie Garden, who had heard somewhere that coins of the current mintage were placed in cavities in foundation stones, was chipping a hollow in the bedding of the “E.G.” stone for the reception of a well-brightened sixpence and a document in his own handwriting, that should tell future ages how one John Willie Garden had lived and had done thus and thus. The sun was hot; the new timbers were as bright as John Willie's own primrose-coloured hair against the intense blue; and the workmen below seemed to stand on their shadows as lead soldiers stand on their little bases of metal. John Willie finished his cavity, and then clambered up to the ridge-tree. There, putting his hands behind his head, he lay on his back, his dangling legs balancing him below. He blinked up at the sky, and from time to time called across to Dafydd Dafis, “Peth a elwir (whatever the English word might

be) yn Cymraeg, Dafydd?” Then Dafydd would give him the Welsh, and he would practise it softly.

It was just on the stroke of midday when Dafydd abruptly broke off his singing in the middle of a word. John Willie, blinking up at the blue, waited for him to resume; as he did not do so, John Willie turned his head. Dafydd was looking away over the sandhills in the direction of John Pritchard’s farm.

John Willie sat up.

“ Who is it ? ” he asked.

Dafydd continued to look under his hand.—“ Indeed, it look like Mr. Sheard,” he muttered, “ but he have strangers with him. It is Mr. Sheard’s carr-adge, whatever. . . . Hugh Roberts ! ” He called to the men down below, who were making ready for their midday meal. He said something in Welsh to them, and they too looked.

Mr. Sheard’s governess-cart was drawn up by the earth-wall half a mile away, and from it three figures had descended. They climbed over the wall and began to cross the sandhills. One of them walked slowly and somewhat after the manner of a clock-work toy, as if he was pacing a distance; and another, after looking this way and that about him, moved off to the right, apparently also pacing. He stopped and held up his hand, and then returned, laying out along the ground as he went, something that made a little glitter in the sun. They came together again, and seemed to confer. Then over the earth-wall John Pritchard climbed, and William Sheard went to meet him. After that they all pointed, in various directions.

Dafydd Dafis, from the top of the pale yellow toast-rack, called something else in Welsh, too quick for John Willie to hear. Then he gazed again. Something else

was coming along the Porth Neigr road. Dafydd, who had the eyes of a river-poacher, knew both the cart and the two men who rode on the load. It drew nearer. Sheard and the two men seemed to be explaining something to John Pritchard. After a time John Pritchard walked away.

Dafydd Dafis descended from the roof, followed by John Willie Garden. He had put his hammer into his pocket; his little heap of cut nails remained on the coping. The men had gathered into a cluster, but none went over the sandhills to see what was happening.

Then a frequently repeated word struck John Willie's ear. He turned to Dafydd Dafis.

"Peth a elwir 'adwydd' yn Saesneg, Dafydd?" he asked.

Dafydd Dafis looked as if he had never sung in his life.

"Post — hedgestake," he replied.

Slowly they got out their dinner.

As they did so Howell Gruffydd came up from the beach. Formerly, he had rebuked Eesaac Oliver for speaking Welsh in the presence of those who did not understand it; now, John Willie Garden's presence was entirely disregarded. He did not understand six words of the low, rapid conversation.

Then in the middle of it a light sound came over the sandhills, and the talk suddenly ceased. They waited. The sound came again.

Hedgestakes were being flung from the cart down by the side of the road.

The workmen continued to sit after dinner, but not a ladder was mounted again that day.

John Pritchard was big and sickly and consumptive, and his farm kitchen was also the Llanyglo Post Office.

There John Willie went at six o'clock that evening to post a letter for his mother. Nominally, John's mother, ancient Mrs. Pritchard, whom Dafydd Dafis so greatly loved, was the postmistress, but actually Miss Nancy Pritchard, the schoolmistress, did most of the work. She was sealing the letter-bag from a saucer of melted wax when John Willie entered. The postman's cart waited at the door, and beyond it, past the gate, could be seen the hedgestakes that had been shot down on the opposite side of the road. The postman was explaining something to John Pritchard, and Dafydd Dafis and his labourers listened in silence. In her chair by the fire sat ancient Mrs. Pritchard, seeming old as the Dinas itself, her face a skull with a membrane stretched over it, a black gophered snood surrounding it, her hands anatomies, and her mouth from time to time making a sort of weak baa-ing.

Of the hushed and rapid conversation at the door, John Willie caught this time a phrase or two he understood. “Wait and see, whatever,” he heard them say; “let them drive them in . . . adwydd . . . perhaps it be on Thursday . . . Saesneg. . . .” He approached the group.

“Peth a elwir ——” he began.

But the men who formerly had made much of him now took no notice of him at all.

The next day two strangers from Porth Neigr appeared at Llanyglo, and began to stake out and to enclose a belt of land that extended, roughly, from the Porth Neigr road on both sides of John Pritchard's farm nearly as far as Edward Garden's house. John Willie watched these two men at work with their pawls, measuring and driving, but the curious thing was that nobody else did so. Save for the Porth Neigr men, the

blue and sulphur butterflies and the rabbits, the sand-hills were extraordinarily deserted. John Willie wandered here and there in search of somebody to talk to, and by and by found himself in Howell Gruffydd's shop. The grocer showed his false teeth in a smile, and then continued to weigh sugar.

"Well, John Willie Garden, can you say 'Llanfair-pwllgwyngyll ——' yet?" he asked, his eyes gleaming as brightly as the bright scoop in his hand.

"Where's everybody?" John Willie demanded.

"You look for Eesaac Oliver?" Howell asked. "He go errand for me, to the lighthouse. You meet him coming back if you go."

"Where are all the men?" John Willie demanded again, and Howell made a quick and mocking gesture.

"Indeed, one hide behind that cur-tain — quick, look see! . . . Ha, ha, ha!" he laughed when John Willie involuntarily turned in the direction in which he had pointed. "I cat-s you that time, John Willie Garden! You think there's a man behind that lit-tle cur-tain, hardly so big as my apron! Your sister, she s'arper than that, whatever! . . . You go find Eesaac Oliver. He fetch eggs from the lighthouse. Perhaps you meet all the men there too ——"

And that was as much as John Willie could get out of him.

It was plain that something extraordinary was toward. It was a habit of John Willie Garden's to look in at Pritchard's farm of an evening, and there to pass the news with John Pritchard and to watch his ancient mother, bent doublefold over her Bible, running a rush-light along line after line so close to the page that the book was scored across with bars of smoky brown. He went as usual that evening. But he had hardly opened

the door when it was closed again upon him. “We go to bed,” said John Pritchard, and packed John Willie off without his customary “Nos da.”

But John Willie knew that they were not going to bed. The door had not been closed so quickly but that he had seen a dozen men crowding the kitchen, and Dafydd Dafis’s eyes, hollower than ever in the light of the candle that stood at his elbow, with a sentimental and knife-like gleam in them as they turned.

The next morning, every stake that those two Porth Neigr men had driven in had been uprooted again, and a board with “Rhybudd” on it lay down the beach, already lapped by the rising tide.

It was once told to the writer of *The Visitors’ Sixpenny Guide to Llanyglo and Neighbourhood* — a young man with so little regard for his bread and butter that he made a labour of love of a job that brought him in exactly ten pounds — it was once told to this over-conscientious author, by a man who had known Squire Wynne very well, that the Squire, finding himself one day in Liverpool, and taking a walk to the docks with an acquaintance in the Royal Engineers, pointed down the Mersey past New Brighton, and said, “Do you know, I’ve sometimes had the idea that if this country was ever invaded the enemy would come up there?” — “But surely,” exclaimed his friend, “it’s a difficult piece of navigation?” — “Yes,” the Squire replied, “but half the pilots are Welshmen.”

No doubt the Squire said it without accepting too much responsibility for it. No doubt, too, he would not have allowed anybody else to suggest that Wales might slyly open a back-door into England. But that there was something, much or little, in it, the famous Llany-

glo Inclosures Dispute, that now began, lasted off and on for three years, and then came to an end in as fantastic a manner as you could conceive, seemed to show.

For that dispute would not have been so obstinate and envenomed had it been simply a question of grazing, turbary, and right-of-way. True, there might still have been the fence-destruction and gate-burning that presently filled John Willie Garden's heart with a fearful joy; but — and this is what made the difference — Owen Glyndwr and his triumph over Mortimer would not have been dragged in, nor Taliesin and his prophecy, nor Howel Dda, nor Gruffydd ap Rhys, nor Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, nor a hundred other grey and valiant and unforgotten ghosts of princes and saints and bards whose names string (as it were) all Wales, from Braich-y-Pwll to St. David's Head, making of it one Western Harp in which the wind of sentiment is never still.

For these fences on the Llanyglo sandhills were not fences — they were Saxon fences. They were not notice-boards and gates — they were the insulting tokens of invasion and rapine and defeat. The Welshman says of himself that he is able to keep only that which he has lost, and, in Dafydd Dafis's view of it, at all events, not a piratical Liverpool Syndicate, but a marauding Saesneg king had come again.

On the evening of the day on which those fences were laid flat again, John Willie went once more to Pritchard's farm, and this time was not refused admittance. Perhaps nobody either saw or heard him enter. As if it had been put there for a signal, a single candle in a flat tin stick stood among the geraniums in the little square window-recess, and, save for a dull glow from the shell of peats on the hearth, that was the only light in the room. Again seven or eight men were gathered there,

some sitting on the hard old horsehair sofa, two on the table, and others crouched or standing in corners; and the candle-light rested here on a bit of lustre-ware, there on a chair knob, and elsewhere on a cheekbone or the knuckles of a hand. It barely reached Dafydd Dafis, who sat in the farthest corner, with his cap on his head and his head resting against a Post Office proclamation that hung on the wall. No sound could be heard save the loud tock-tocking of the tall clock with the in-turned scrolls on the top and the gilt pippin between them.

John Willie thought it would be more grown-up to accept their silence and to share their motionlessness. He set his elbows on the dresser and sank his neck between his shoulders. The shadow of great John Pritchard, who sat on the sofa's end, covered John Willie and half the wall behind him as well, and John Willie's eyes only discovered Dafydd Dafis in the farther corner when Dafydd moved. As he moved, a bit of gilt fluting dipped forward out of the gloom of the chimney-corner. Dafydd had his harp.

The next moment a single thrumming note had broken out. It was followed by a soft chord of three or four more. . . .

“*Mae hen wlad fy Nhadau yn anwyl i mi,
Gwlad beirdd a chantorion, emvogion o fri—*”

It is the commonest air you will hear in Wales—*Land of my Fathers*. Quarrymen sing it as they work by their trucks, slate-splitters whistle it as they tap in their wedges, farmers' lads tss-tss it between their teeth as they clump along the road, sitting sideways on their horses. You would think it had died an age ago of familiarity and repetition. Had it been *God Save the King*, played at an English theatre, there would have

been a single line of it, half lost in the reaching for shawls and cloaks and fans, and here and there a man would have stood with an interval of an inch between his hat and his head, and already the attendants would have been getting out the sheeting for the stalls — so long is it since we knew adversity. But here, it needed but a stake driven into a foreshore that would hardly have pastured a donkey, and that was enough — so much adversity have they seen. . . . Then, as John Willie craned his neck, a man moved from in front of the candle among the geraniums, and Dafydd Dafis's hands could be seen. They seemed not so much hands as multiple things, assemblies of members each one of which was possessed of an independent life and will. There was not a finger that did not lurk, stiffen, clutch, and then start back from the throbbing string as if each note had been a poignant deed done, an old and secret vow redeemed. For the images that were evoked were cruel images. Those fingers of Dafydd's might have been choosing, not among strings of wire and gut, but among the living nerves of an enemy whose moans of suffering were transmuted into music. Know, that this — not the languid wrist nor the caressing hand, not the swans-neck forearm nor the coquetry of the foot on the pedal — not these, but the hook, the claw, the distortion, and the wreaking and the more than human and yet somehow less than human love — this is the harping of Wales. . . .

"Gwlad! Gwlad! —"

Dafydd's head against the Post Office notice did not move, but his twisted hand might have wrenched the sinews from their shoulder-blade of a frame —

"Pleidiol wyf i'm Gwlad! —"

He did not sing the words, but the words that sang themselves in the ear of every man there meant that he was so enwrapped in his country that an alien stake in her soil was a stake in his heart also. . . .

Within a week of that harping of *Hen Wlad*, Terry Armfield had more to mind than he had ever reckoned for.

There was no doubt that the flame was fanned largely by the Chapels. These were, respectively, of the three denominations most common in Wales, namely, Baptist, Calvinistic Methodist, and Independent; and Terry Armfield, coming down presently to see for himself what all the trouble was about, gave one affrighted look at their architecture, gasped, “Shade of Pugin!” and fled. The Baptist Chapel was a plain slate-roofed Noah’s Ark of stone that, with the day-school adjoining it, stood alone in the middle of the sandhills. At one end of its roof-ridge was a small structure in which a bell swung, and the building had this further peculiarity, that, good stone being cheaper at Llanyglo than common bricks, the latter material had been used wherever an embellishment had been desired. The Independent Chapel was also of stone, with zinc ventilators like those of a weaving-shed; these looked over the fishermen’s cottages out to sea not far from Edward Garden’s house. And the third Chapel, that of the Methodists, of which body Howell Gruffydd was the principal pillar, lay behind the farms. It was of corrugated iron and wood, painted inside with a skirting of chocolate brown and upper walls of a peculiarly sickly light blue. On the walls were stencilled ribbons with V-shaped ends, and these bore texts in Welsh. Architecturally all these were hideous, but, to those whose grandfathers had worshipped in the fields and in clefts of the barren moun-

tains and on the wide seashore, they had the beauty of a thing that has been ardently desired, and long suffered for, and passionately loved.

For from these three Chapels came not only the impulse of the spiritual life of Llanyglo, but its local politics of dissent also. Education, the Poor Law, matters of Local Government, Temperance, Tenure, the Eisteddfod, and the nursing of Nationalism — if these things were not actually Llanyglo's religion, they were hardly divisible from it. And this welding of Faith with secular works was helped by two other circumstances. The first circumstance was that no language was heard in the chapels but Welsh; and the second was that, as a result of the local-preacher system, three times out of four the Welsh issued from the same mouths — from Howell Gruffydd's mouth at the Methodist Chapel, from big John Pritchard at the Baptists', and from Owen Morgan's among the Independents. None of these went quite so far as openly to incite to the destruction of fences.

They merely prayed to be delivered from the situation in which they found themselves.

Whereupon, like Drake's men, heartened by prayer, they rose from their knees again to take another pull on the rope.

So three times in six weeks those fences were set up and laid flat again; and then it was that Terry Armfield came down, saw the Chapels (as above mentioned), gasped "Shade of Pugin!" and straightway sought Squire Wynne.

But before ever he set eyes on the Squire he had already almost forgotten the errand that had brought him. As the servant showed him to the dining-room he saw that noble ruin of a staircase, and his eyes be-

came illumined. Then, in the dining-room, those same eyes rested on the coffered ceiling and the portraits and the wide mullioned lattice. By the time the Squire entered he was adoring the stately stone fireplace. He swung round, hearing the Squire's step.

“Magnificent, magnificent!” he cried. “Show me over the house—I beg you to show me over the house! —”

The Squire, who had had this kind of visitor before (though none with quite that perilous smoulder in his eye that Terry had) naturally concluded that a fellow-antiquary, finding himself in the neighbourhood, had permitted himself to beg for a sight of the faded glories of the Plas.

“I'll show you over part of the house with pleasure,” said the Squire; and he did so.

“Magnificent!” Terry cried again, when they were once more back in the dining-room. “And oh, that rood-screen—early sixteenth—and those sedilia—in your Church over there! I spent an hour there as I came along.”

“Oh, you came Porth Neigr way, did you?” said the Squire.

As if he had previously written the Squire a letter setting forth his business in detail, which therefore he need not repeat, Terry leaped light-heartedly ahead.

“Yes, sir—and then, after that, to come upon those incredible Chapels! (That's a misnomer, by the way, unless they contain relics.) . . . Of course, after that I'm not surprised at anything these people do—fences or anything else —”

The Squire was reaching port from the sideboard.—
“Eh?” he said, not quite understanding.

“*Those* places an expression of religious emotion!”

Terry cried, throwing up his hands. "Of course, what's happened was a perfectly natural result! Commit such an outrage on the æsthetic sense as that and — and *no* fence is safe! If I'd seen those Chapels first I'd as soon have bought a volcano as that land! They ought to have been mentioned by the vendors — flagrant *suppressio veri* — deliberate concealment of a material fact — an action ought to lie — by Jove, I've a good mind to take advice about it! ——"

"I beg your pardon?" said the puzzled Squire.

A very few questions served to enlighten him. His mouth twitched as he filled his harebrained visitor's glass.

"Well," he said, "I don't quite follow your processes, but your result seems all right. If you mean there's some connection between the Chapels and your fences being pulled down, I dare say you're not very far wrong. The places of worship do settle a good many things indirectly here. But our own Establishment's been called a branch of the Civil Service, so I don't see how we can complain if some of their activities are a little secular too."

"'A little secular!'" echoed Terry. "Pulling down fences 'a little secular!' . . . Now I'm anxious not to go to extreme lengths ——"

"Eh?" said the Squire rather quickly. He gave Terry a longish look. . . . "Do you know Wales?" he asked politely.

"I do not. But I've not heard that it's outside the Law. I was going to say, that I don't want to issue summonses if it can be avoided ——"

Thereupon the Squire, who was inclined to like this half-mystical zany of a guest, gave him the same advice he had given to Edward Garden.

“Oh, avoid it if you possibly can!” he said good-humouredly. “There’s nothing these people won’t do for you if you go the right way about it, but it must be the right way. A new neighbour of yours seems to be getting along with them quite successfully, a man called Garden. Quite an opportunist, I should say — takes things just as he finds them — settles every question strictly on its merits and has a good deal of audacity up his sleeve for use at the right moment, I don’t doubt. Can’t you take a leaf out of his book?”

“Do they pull down his fences?” Terry demanded over his shoulder; he had been looking at that marvellous fireplace again.

“I don’t think so. As a matter of fact they’re building his house for him.—By the way — Sheard’s told me very little about it — have you bought your land to build on?”

Terry, remembering his Syndicate, had a momentary check.—“I don’t know yet,” he confessed.

“Because if you have,” the Squire continued, “and find them employment — spend money in the place — and use a certain amount of tact — you might hit it off with them. But do try to overlook their Chapels. A soul’s sometimes saved under a tin roof, you know.”

Terry looked as if he would far rather have his soul damned under a Gothic nave.—“That’s simply buying ’em off,” he said. He would have preferred to burn them, each at one of the stakes they had uprooted.

“Well. . . . I’m afraid it’s all the advice I can give you.—And now I shall have to ask you to excuse me. I’ll show you a rather fine carved kingpost before you go if you like ——”

And Terry presently departed for Porth Neigr again,

where he took the taste of the Chapels out of his mouth in a further ecstatic contemplation of the early sixteenth-century rood-screen.

The fences were set up again.

John Willie Garden could never be sufficiently grateful to his stars that what happened next came before he departed for school again. He had gone to bed that night, but was lying awake, thinking of the suspended building. He knew that the resumption of that building was not irremediably involved in the fencing dispute; Edward Garden had established a serviceable goodwill in Llanyglo; and that very night, standing by Pritchard's manure-heap, Dafydd Dafis had all but told John Willie that when Llanyglo had settled with the intruder it would have time to spare for the child of its adoption again. He had told him this, and had then ruffled up John Willie's fair hair with his hand and had added that it was ten o'clock and time he was in bed.

His little window, as well as that of the next room, where his mother slept, overlooked the sandhills, and John Willie, lying awake, did not at first notice the change in its colour. Neither did his ears hear at first a low muffled cracking that had been going on for some time. But suddenly he sat up. The muslin curtains and the claywashed embrasure of the window had a rusty glow, which reached the counterpane of the bed in which John Willie lay.

The moment he saw this John Willie was out of bed. Then, within thirty seconds, he had plunged into his jersey, tucked his nightgown hastily into his knickers, and, making as little noise as possible, had tiptoed down the stairs and out of the cottage.

The bright glow over the sandhills guided him, and he ran as fast as he could through the muffing sand.

The continuous cracks were like pistols, and a deep roaring could be heard, which became louder. Then, mounting a hillock, John Willie saw the beautiful blaze. It was as high as a cottage, and the twisting, upstreaming column of sparks above it rose fifty feet into the night. It illumined the sandhills far and wide. The Baptist Chapel and schoolhouse looked as if they were cut out of red cardboard against the night. Even the zinc ventilators of the Independent Chapel, down by the sea, showed faintly. Then all became grey again as a dozen fresh stakes were piled on. By the time John Willie Garden got there these too had caught, with volleys of cracks. Every man in Llanyglo was there, and, farther off, groups of women also. The heat was intense, so that the men and lads who ran in to throw back half-consumed ends did so with their faces averted.

“ Why didn’t you tell me ? ” said John Willie to Dafydd Dafis reproachfully.

Dafydd was watching this beautiful Red Dragon of a flame that was burning Saxon stakes. His eyes blinked rapidly. Then he leant over John Willie, and his forefinger tapped two or three times on the boy’s heart.

“ You wass tell me you go to bed,” he whispered. “ You wass tell me that, at ten o’clock, at John Pritchard’s. There iss two men over there —— ” suddenly he straightened himself again and pointed, “ — you can tell them the same whatever.”

A hundred and fifty yards away two men watched. They were the men from Porth Neigr who had set up the fences. They put up at a wayside cottage two miles away, and probably they were not surprised at what was happening. They did not approach any nearer.

Then there was a call of "John Willie!" and Mrs. Garden's terrified face could be seen in the outer ring of light. John Willie was haled off, in a rage that was nearer to tears than he would have admitted.

Four days later summonses were served on Dafydd Dafis and two other men.

The serving of those summonses had an instant and very remarkable effect. This effect was, that three of the inhabitants of Llanyglo straightway lost all recollection of the English language. And not only did they, the summoned ones, lose it, but every witness called from Llanyglo fell into an ignorance as blank. This happened at Sessions, before Squire Wynne himself, who, in the days before this visitation of forgetfulness, had talked English to all of them. The gloomy magistrates' Court opposite Porth Neigr railway station was crowded. Terry Armfield, at whose instance the summonses had been issued, thought he had never seen such a set of pigjobbers as stood against the perspiring walls or sat with their chins on their outspread forearms, their caps in their hands or in the pockets of their corduroys. The two men who had put up the fences sat in the well of the Court. They were brothers, and their name was Kerr. The skylight shone on the baldish head of the elder of them, and both had given their evidence in a strong Lancashire accent. They had been watching on the sandhills, they said, expecting something of the sort, and knew that it had taken place at exactly ten o'clock, because they had both looked at their watches. . . .

So "Dim Saesneg," said man after man; and the Squire could only make dots with his pen on the blotting-paper before him, keep his eyes from Terry Armfield, and call for an interpreter.

Now interpretation takes time, during which time the

person with most to gain can be thinking of the tale he will tell next. So the prosecuting solicitor stood up before Dafydd Dafis, and this kind of thing began:

“Were you on this land at ten o’clock that night?”

(“*Oeddych chi ar y tir yma am ddeg o’r gloch y noson hono, Dafydd Dafis?*” This from the interpreter.)

A rapid denial from Dafydd, not a hair of his shaggy moustache moving.

“Ask him where he was.”

“*Lle r’oeddych chi, Dafydd Dafis?*”

The harpist, his fingers twisting his cap, answered that he had been at Pritchard’s farm, and this also was translated.

“Have you any witnesses?”

(“*Oes genych chi dystion, Dafydd Dafis?*”)

“Eh?”

“*Oes genych chi dystion?*”

“*R’oeddwn efo John Willie Garden.*”

(“He says he can call the son of the man who is building a house there, sir.”) . . .

And so it went on, hour after hour, with the English evidence likewise translated for the benefit of the defendants. At the end of the first day the case was adjourned, but it came on again on the morrow, and again on the day after that. It began to dam all other business. As a block in traffic causes an accumulation behind, so other cases began to collect — drunks, dog-licences, drivings without lights, and innumerable other petty disputes. There was no question that the fences had been burned; the only question was whether they had got hold of the right men. The Bench could not understand the obstinacy with which the two Lancashire witnesses persisted that the outrage had occurred at exactly ten o’clock.

"But mightn't it have been half-past ten, or eleven, or even half-past eleven?" they were asked again and again.

"Ah, it might," they admitted open-mindedly. "But it wasn't," they added unshakably.

Dafydd Dafis wanted to know what they said.

"Oh, translate it," the Squire sighed, and for the fortieth time it was translated.

"*R'oeddw'n efo John Willie Garden,*" said Dafydd once more. . . .

And that was great glory for John Willie, for he was called, asked whether he knew the nature of an oath, was sworn, and raised a general laugh by varying the formula with which the Court was not so drearly familiar, and saying, in Welsh, "*Dim Cymraeg.*" He stood to it that at ten o'clock Dafydd Dafis had been talking to him by Pritchard's manure-heap.

"Oh, for God's sake settle it or do something!" the Squire said impatiently to Terry Armfield, as he crossed the road to the Station Hotel for lunch. "You can't say I didn't warn you."

"I doubt whether my own witnesses would let me now," Terry replied. "They're as cranky in their way as your own Fenians. Besides, as I told you, I'm acting for others."

"Well, if I bind 'em over they'll only do it again," sighed the Squire.

Terry himself began to weary. After all, he had other things to mind than a piece of beggarly waste land dotted with Chapels that were a blasphemy of the name of beauty.

As the Squire ate his chop in the coffee-room, the two witnesses from Lancashire sat each on a tall stool in the sawdusted tap round the corner. Thick imperial

pint glasses of mild ale stood on the counter before them. The elder and baldish one was a man of three or four and forty, a hard, handy little man, with a curious dip and slope about his right shoulder. This slight lopsidedness he had acquired during the years in which he had wandered North Wales buying and felling alders for clog-soles. Any time this last twenty years you might have come across him in his little canvas hut in the middle of a wood, with a pile of split alder-billets on one side of him which, plying his hinged knife on its solid base with marvellous dexterity, he shaped roughly into the clog-soles which he cast on a pile on his other side, while his brother felled. He would buy all the alders in a wood, at so much a foot over all; the rough-dressed soles went off to Manchester; and no doubt a good many of them found their way into Edward Garden's spinning-sheds. In the course of his travels he had picked up from the gentry and their stewards volumes of gossip of families and their vicissitudes, of wills, boundaries, timber-news, and customs and tenures rapidly becoming obsolete; and his coat, a brown check with wide pockets, had probably been made a dozen years before in Conduit Street. He wore a tie, but no collar. As the Court had assumed on its own responsibility that he spoke no Welsh, he had not considered it his business to correct the mistake, but had allowed them to translate for him also — perhaps for reasons not fundamentally different from those of Dafydd Dafis himself. He had half a week's stubble on his chin and thin upper lip; he spat with great accuracy; and he turned to humour things not generally accounted humorous, such as scaffold accidents, fights, and deaths from dropsy.

His brother, save that he wore a collar and no tie, was a younger edition of him.

They drank from the thick glasses in silence, and then the elder of them drew out a short clay pipe with a dottle in the bottom of the bowl, struck a match on the side of it, and lighted up. The dottle made a noise like frying. His brother also drew out his pipe, a clay shaped like a cowboy's head. He gave an indescribably short jerk of his head in the direction of the other's waistcoat pocket, then, when the stub of cake was thrown over to him, cut it with a knife with a curved blade. He stuffed these brains of black tobacco into the cowboy's head, and made another minute gesture. This was a request for a match. Then, bringing out sixpence from his pocket, he knocked once with the heavy glass on the counter.

"Two more cups o' tea," he said to the young woman who approached.

They smoked again in silence.

It was the elder brother who spoke first.

"I'm capped about them watches, an' right!" he mused.

The other took a pull at his beer, and replaced the cowboy pipe in his mouth.

"I cannot think th' bairn wor telling 'em lies," the elder one mused again.

"Gi'e me another match," said his brother.

The alder-buyer's wrinkled eyes were peering sideways at an auction announcement pinned to the wall. He shifted his feet in the legs of the tall stool. By and by he spoke again.

"Let's see. Let's study it out. . . . We com' home at tea-time that day, didn't we?"

"Ay."

"Then we went out into th' yard and washed we'rsens at th' bucket."

“Ay.”

A pause, and then, the speaker’s eyes on his hearer’s face like two prickers:

“Did yet tak’ your waistcoat off?”

“I cannot tell ye.”

“I did mine. I threw it down on a chair i’ t’ kitchen.”

This time the younger brother shifted his feet.

“Happen I did mine an’ all.”

“Wor your watch i’ your pocket?”

“Ay, it wad be.”

“So wor mine.”

They drank thoughtfully and simultaneously, and again the silence fell.

Then, more slowly still, the elder Kerr resumed.

“D’ye remember a chap coming in, a thin chap, ’at spoke Welsh to t’ Missis?”

“Ay.”

“He com’ to fetch a pair o’ boots to mend.”

“Ay.”

“Think ye——” again the look as of prickers,
“—think ye there wor owt?”

“How, owt?”

“’At he wanted to know what time it wor, or owt?”

“There wor t’ clock.”

“Ay. . . .”

There were minutes of silence this time. Evidently the younger brother occupied them by taking, in thought, a considerable journey. He spoke as if in objection to some far-fetched surmise.

“But they’d ha’ to be set forrard again,” he grunted.

“Ay, I’m bothered wi’ that,” the elder admitted,
“—wi’out t’ Missis herself——”

“Aw! . . . Think ye? . . .”

They knocked for two more cups of tea.

“And we’ve been swearing to ten o’clock.”

“So ye think there wor summat?”

“I cannot think t’ lad wor telling ’em lies,” said the alder-buyer.

This time they both peered reflectively at the auction announcement on the wall, smoking and spitting as they peered.

THE HAFOD UNOS

“**T**HEN,” said Terry’s Syndicate, or such of its members as lounged in Terry’s office, looking down on the Lime Street and St. George’s Hall pavements as if they had been so many fishermen selecting a likely spot for the casting of a fly, “what about going back to the old idea — coal?”

“Hm! —” (a very dubious “Hm!”). — “Far better have another shot at manganese — especially after what’s happened —”

What had happened had started remotely enough from Llanyglo. It had started, to be exact, in the Balkans. Much manganese comes from the Balkans; a war there had suddenly made the supply a mere trickle, so that prices had whooped up; and — wonder of wonders — those old workings of Squire Wynne’s, farther along the coast, actually looked like paying. Terry’s Company, unhappily, had just transferred its rights, and was rather sore about it.

“Wouldn’t that be a little too — timely?” a timid member suggested.

“Not if you — er — put it properly. It’s only thirty miles away —” The speaker paused from delicacy. “From the real manganese” was understood.

“Might send a geologist down — one we could trust —”

A very young member of the Syndicate hazarded a remark.—“But wouldn't burnt mine-works come dearer than burnt fences?”

They smiled indulgently at him. He was merely suffering from a slight confusion of ideas. Nobody had said anything about mine-works. Then they turned to Terry.

“What do you say, Armfield?” . . .

It was now winter, and the dispute was still dragging on. There had been no further fence-burning, but the Member for the constituency had been memorialised, a joint meeting had been held in the Llanyglo schoolroom, and he had promised to come down and see for himself how matters stood. Until he should do so the disputants glared, so to speak, at one another. A certain element of contempt, that looked at first like tolerance, had even entered into the quarrel. Thus, a section of fence on a portion of the sandhills that it would have been a positive inconvenience to visit was allowed to stand. Llanyglo preferred to reserve its strength. But elsewhere the stakes lay half buried in the sand, and John Willie Garden now and then wondered what sort of a raft they would make.

“The whole thing looks like being a damned bad spec,” the Syndicate grumbled.

That opinion seemed to be gaining strength.

There seemed to be more than a chance that Llanyglo, its heathery Trwyn and its purple mountains, its unproductive sandhills and its non dividend-paying sea, would be written off by Terry's Syndicate as a total loss.

Then, all in a night, something astonishing happened at Llanyglo.

The words “all in a night” are to be understood in their very plainest sense. Granted that it was a

winter's night, and therefore a long one, with the darkness setting in soon after four and the sun not coming up behind the mountains again until nearly eight; none the less the fact remained that Llanyglo went to bed as usual, and woke up to rub its eyes, unable to believe what it so plainly saw. What had happened was this:

With Edward Garden's house-roof still a toast-rack against the wintry sky, and his slates just as they had been left after Eesaac Oliver's last long-division sum, and only half the staircase yet fitted, and the little socket John Willie had scooped out under the date-stone still awaiting its sixpence — with all this arrested as life and growth and motion were arrested in the Enchanted Palace, the first new house had gone up in Llanyglo. Where had been nothing the night before, there it now was, staring at them when the sun rose, a house, with smoke coming out of its chimney.

That same friend of Squire Wynne's who repeated to the author of the *Sixpenny Guide* the Squire's remark about invasion *viâ* the Mersey, told him also what a Welsh "Hafod Unos" is.

"You know what the words mean," he said. "Strictly speaking, it's the summer-house — pavilion — shelter — of a night. The essentials are that it must be built on common land, and in a single night. Then they can't eject you. At least that's the idea. Don't ask me how it stands in Law. It may be a kind of squatter's right, or anything else, or it may have no standing at all. Probably it hasn't. But that's neither here nor there. They have their notions about it, and those at any rate are immemorial. Look here: you're pottering about this country just now; just count how many houses you find with the name 'Hafod Unos.'

You'll find quite a lot. There's a very big one Bangor way, that probably took some years to build, but probably one of these places was its foundation. . . . And a house 'within the meaning of the Act,' so to speak, means that smoke must have gone up the chimney. Cook your breakfast there, and — well, after that you're a sort of tolerated freeholder. It might be worth putting into your Guide Book. You'd better add a footnote, though, that the 'f' in 'hafod' is a 'v,' and 'unos' is pronounced 'innos.' . . . Not at all; you're welcome to any help I can give you ——”

Llanyglo, snugly in bed, had heard the sounds across the sandhills during the night, but they had been set down to the newest development of the fencing dispute. This development was that, a week or so before, several cartloads of undressed stone had been shot down by the side of the sandy gully that ran from Pritchard's gap down to the shore. And Llanyglo had smiled. Aha! They were going to build a walled enclosure, were they? Something that wouldn't burn, whatever? Well, well, if it amused them to build walls on winter nights when everybody else was warm in bed, they might. They would only lose their labour in the end. Mr. Tudor Williams, of Ponteglwys, was going to ask a question in the House of Commons, yes, and he was coming down to speak at the Chapel and to see for himself. It was a cold night for building walls, whatever ——

So they stayed in bed, and only the revolving Trwyn light, two reds and a white, saw the planting of the thorn in Llanyglo's side.

The two Kerrs did not do it alone. It took four of them — “a Kerr to each corner,” as Howell Gruffydd afterwards said. The two other brothers had been

sent for from Ratchet, where one of them worked in an asbestos factory and the other was a builder's labourer; and if these imported ones lacked that spur of conviction that their watches had been tampered with by tricky Welshmen, they had another and a double incentive — the sense of family unity, and of the honour of the gradeliest county on earth, Lancashire. No Kerr, no lad from Lancashire whomsoever, could thole to be bested by a Welshman. Lancashire was the place for which Johnnie Briggs played cricket, the place where the Waterloo Cup Meeting was held. They danced in clogs there, clogs with soles of Welsh alder, and laaked at quoits and knurr and spell, and knew a bit about homing pigeons, not to speak of cocks, the game kind. They were lads, and right, in Lancashire.— Wales? Wales produced nothing but alders and oats and goats and Chapels.

The idea had been that of Ned, the eldest brother, and it was part of the miscellaneous general information he had picked up on his alder-prospecting through Merionethshire and Montgomery and Carnarvon and Denbigh and Flint. He had seen a way of convicting Llanyglo out of its own mouth. They threw down fences on the grounds that the land was common land; very well, if it was common, as they claimed, it was a proper site for a Hafod Unos. Sauce for the goose, sauce for the gander; and merely as a poke in the eye for watch-tinkering Welshmen, and a vindication of Lancashire's superior wit and malice, it would be worth a night's work to see their faces in the morning.

So to work in the dark the four brothers got.

They helped themselves to a modest slice of Llanyglo earth, plotted it out with stakes and string, and then began to dig. The night was moonless, and they worked

by the light of four lanterns. These illumined little enough of the waste; the moving, straddling shadows they cast hardly began before they were lost in the darkness again. Knitting-needles of light came and went again on the polished handles of the rising and falling spades, and faintly, regularly, and as if a spirit passed high overhead in the night, the intermittent Trwyn beam swung — red, red, white — red, red, white —

They had not to dig deep; there is much volcanic rock under the Llanyglo sand; and they had not set up fences half a dozen times without having a notion where it was.

“Here we are,” Harry, the builder’s labourer grunted as his spade gave a clink and a jump in his hand. “I thowt it wadn’t be far off.— Is t’ barril there, Tommy?”

Across a mound of thrown-up sand one of the lanterns cast a short parabola of shadow. It was the shadow of a nine-gallon barrel of beer.

“Nay, we mun do a bit first,” Tommy replied, spitting on his hands and driving in his spade again.

Their house already existed, complete in their practical heads, before ever a spade was lifted. They had seen through its entire anatomy in the taproom of the Station Hotel, with beer to solve all difficulties. Nothing was done twice, and brother did not get in brother’s way. Even as Howell Gruffydd said, they took a corner of their plan apiece and dry-walled, all save Tommy, who went to and fro with a hand-cart, fetching stone, not too much at a time, because of the dead softness of the sand. For the general design Ned’s word was law; for details, each used his own gumption. They worked and grunted, and worked and grunted, and

worked. By the time Sirius appeared over faraway Delyn, and Orion balanced himself on Mynedd Mawr, they had a serviceable first course laid. Then they put on their coats again, for it was a bitter night and they perspired, and with a single blow Tommy neatly tapped the barrel. They drank, threw off their coats again, and set to work once more.

"Never heed that, Sam," Ned said once, seeing his brother elaborating the stark essential plan that had been agreed upon in the taproom of the Station Hotel. "T' corners, t' beams, and t' roof; we haven't time to paint it and put a pot o' geraniums i' t' window."

By one o'clock the lanterns showed four irregular angles of masonry, shoulder-high, as rough as you please, but true by plumb and level. This might be a joke against Llanyglo, but it was a workmanlike one. Only two of the brothers now walled, for they had only two ladders; Sam helped Tom to lift and carry beams.

By three o'clock only two of the beams were laid, but they were the principal ones, and Ned seemed well content.

"That's t' main o' t' work," he said, with satisfaction. "How's t' barril going on, Tom?"

"True by t' level yet," Tom replied. "Shall we start on th' bread and cheese?—"

"Did ye think on to bring some pickled onions?"

"Ay."

"Then we'll ha' we're nooning."

They took their nooning, with Sirius now over Mynedd Mawr, and Orion soaring like a kite. They took it at their leisure; they were "lads from a reight place," setting about a job as if they meant to finish it, not Welshmen matchboarding. A mountain of sand filled the space within their four corners, and they lay

on their backs on it, smoking, and watching the red and white spokes of the light high over their heads, twenty-mile spokes, of a wheel that had no circumference but its sweep through the night. Now and then Sam gave a low chuckle; but Ned smoked, spat, and was silent, save that he said from time to time, "Did ye number and letter them chamfers, Harry?" or some similar question. You would have said they had a month before them. Certainly the Kerrs, when there was a surprise to be prepared for foreigners who meddled with their watches, were members one of another.

At half-past three they set to work again. By four Ned had climbed up above, and was sitting astride a beam with the light of a lantern shining up on his streaming face.

"Give us another inch, Sam," he grunted, "— a bit more — a bit more — *whoa!* Tom, that quoin — no, th' one wi' th' bolt — this is th' chimney end — and get them three strutts ready, accordingle to th' letters. . . . How are ye down there, Harry?"

The mason brother was building the chimney. It was an outside one, massive as a buttress, and Harry was building it well and truly, for it was the essential of the house. Smoke must go up it before dawn, the hearth-smoke of civilised man, the lowly and secular and beautiful token that he has made himself an abiding-place on a spot of earth, and becomes part of that spot, and it part of him, so that to deracinate him is to thrust him back again into the bestial state and to make the land as desert as the sea. By all prognostication, Edward Garden's smoke should have been the first to add itself to that of the cluster of humble dwellings between the mountains and the waves that was Llany-glo; but of that lawn of lightsome blue that veils Llany-

glo to-day the breakfast-smoke of the Kerrs was the fore-runner. At half-past four they were shovelling out the mountain of sand and making the hearth for it. By six Tommy had brought in the bundle of dry twigs and faggots he had carefully hidden away. Harry was filling in the space between the main beam and the transom of the door; when Tom asked him for a match he sprang down, and Ned and Sam also descended from the roof.

“What time is it?” Tom asked.

Ned gave a glance round, and smiled for the first time that night as he drew out his watch.

“Five past six,” he said, and added, with indescribable dryness, “— unless som'b'dy's been meddling wi' my watch.”

“Here goes,” said Tommy, striking a match. . . .

They exchanged glances that were near to winks as they watched the flames. It was their equivalent of a cheer.

The night paled; the Trwyn light went out; and off the headland a seal disported itself in the icy sea. The day stole across Delyn, but Mynedd Mawr still remained an awful precipice of ink — the shadow of the morning bank lay over him. Then came the first glitter on the waves, and, as if with light all other faculties awake, folk became conscious of the crowing of cocks and the falling of the breakers on the shore. Howell Gruffydd got up and began to rekindle his fire. A bolt was shot back at Pritchard's farm. Dafydd Dafis packed his breakfast in his tin and set out for his day's work — a little reslating of the roof of the Baptist Chapel.

But on his way across the sandhills he suddenly changed, not only his direction, but his gait also. He advanced cautiously, skirted certain mounds of sand that he did not remember to have seen before, and then

as suddenly drew back. Then, instead of advancing again, he returned by a circuitous route, dropped into a sunken sandy way, and then ran as fast as his legs would carry him down to the cottages. There he thrust his head into Morgan's cottage and said something, and ran to the next one — or rather to the next but two, for Edward Garden's double cottage had been locked up since October. Then Howell Gruffydd came to his shop door, and Dafydd called him.

Five minutes later half Llanyglo was out on the sandhills staring through a gap at something that lay beyond.

It was an extraordinary house they saw, and then went round to the back to look at from another point of view. It appeared to consist of a living-room and a scullery, with a patch under the skeleton of a sort of penthouse at the back. It was not even on the land that had been fenced and unfenced and fenced again. Of roof it had none — for you could hardly call the three or four tarpaulins, that lifted as the wind got under them and were kept down by stones, a roof. Parts of the walls were solidly constructed; other parts had been battened up with hedgestakes, filled in with sods and peats, stuffed up with coats, anything. It had an old door that had been used somewhere else, and appeared to be propped up with stones. Over one window-opening hung an old brown coat, the other frame was empty. A bright glow shone on the rubble within, and smoke and sparks came merrily from the chimney. The fire crackled loudly, and there was a pleasant smell of cooking bacon. All about the cavity in the sand lay stones big and little, timbers, stakes, loops of rope. There was a hand-cart too, with its handle making a T in the air. A scraping sound was heard, as of somebody clean-

ing out a pan, and then came a low "Wouf" and flare of fat in the chimney. Then somebody spoke.

"Squeeze t' barril, Tom, and see if there's another cup o' tea."

"Nay, we've supped t' lot."

"Blow down t' vent-hole. . . ."

As if those walls vanished again even more quickly than they had sprung up, Llanyglo could see a picture vividly in its fancy — a picture of a tilted barrel, with the cheeks of one man distended over the spigot-hole while another caught a muddy trickle in a thick glass —

Then their vision fled, and they were staring at that unimaginable house again —

Slowly, and without a word, they moved off through the soft sand in the direction of the Baptist Chapel.

VI

THE FOOT IN THE DOOR

IT was a Saturday, a day on which the school did not assemble, and the door of the schoolhouse was locked. Eesaac Oliver Gruffydd was sent off in haste for the key. They waited for him to come back, twenty of them, men and women, with others hurrying over the sandhills to join them. Eesaac Oliver ran panting up again, and they entered the schoolhouse. This was a large, yellow-washed room with beams making triangles overhead and hot-water pipes running round the walls below. A small squad of desks stood upright behind, and a number of smaller benches knelt, as it were, in front of them. These faced the raised desk of Miss Nancy Pritchard, the schoolmistress. A yellow chair or two, a couple of glass-fronted cupboards, a row of hooks for caps and cloaks at the back, and a harmonium, completed the furniture. A short covered way near Miss Pritchard's desk gave access to the adjoining Chapel. A door at the side of this led to the little stone outhouse where the water for the pipes both of school and Chapel was heated.

Their astonished exclamations had broken out now. As something legendary and dear and native to their land, it was in their hearts to defend the Hafod Unos; but for a stranger to set one up!

"Look you, it can-not be legal!" exclaimed Hugh Morgan, a little tubby man with semicircular brows and

a round bald forehead. "It iss not even finiss; there iss holes in the walls so-a big I put my head through them! And that iss not a roof — it iss only rick-covers ——"

"It is wonderful how they did it, whatever!" said little restless-eyed Mrs. Gruffydd. Those predatory eyes in Blodwen Gruffydd's pale face could see a six-pence a mile away, and, having seen it, would not leave it again until it had been safely dropped through the slot of the money-box into which the savings for Eesaac Oliver's education went. Eesaac Oliver was not to serve packets of tea and pennyworths of bicarbonate of soda over a grocer's counter. He was to go to Aberystwith College, and to become a preacher, and wear a black chip straw hat.

Howell Gruffydd, who had been as thunderstruck as the rest of them, now affected to take a jocular view of the matter.

"De-ar me, first Mr. Garden's house, and now Ty Kerr! Well, it make trade. Indeed, I need a bigger s'op presently — I think I start a Limited Company ——"

But big consumptive John Pritchard spoke in deep tones. More vividly than any of them, John had seen, as if in a camera obscura, that vision of a Kerr blowing into the vent-hote of a barrel, while another Kerr anxiously watched the tap. — "We need a bigger public-house, I think," he said grimly.

"Indeed you are right, John Pritchard," Hugh Morgan struck eagerly in, the curves of his brows all marred with anxiety. "They sit in the Station Hotel Porth Neigr, and do noth-thing but drinking all day — it set a s'ock-king example, whatever."

"And they call it 'ano-ther cup of tea,'" said a third.

“ They very smart ones —— ”

Again John Pritchard's deep voice came in. — “ They're very deep ones. ”

Little Hugh Morgan spoke excitedly.

“ Indeed you are right again, John Pritchard! John Williams Porth Neigr, he say to me it would not surprise him if that Ned Kerr speak Welss so well as nobody if he wiss! ”

A shocked “ *Aw-w-w!* ” broke out. “ And he say in the Court, ‘ No Welss! ’ ”

“ Tut-tut-tut — de-ar me! ”

They were silent for a moment, contemplating this duplicity.

“ And there iss four of them now, ” one resumed. “ They send into England for two more. ”

“ We soon have large population, ” said Howell Gruffydd again. . . .

John Pritchard had sat down on one of the yellow chairs with his knees a yard apart. His brows seemed knitted.

“ But there is noth-thing for them to do here, ” he said. “ No work, no wages — only building fences. ”

“ Perhaps they have lot of money. Their bacon smell very good, whatever. ”

“ They finiss their breakfast — I heard them wipe the frying-pan out as plain as if I see it with my eyes! ”

Again John Pritchard's heavy voice: “ Finiss their breakfast indeed! They finiss a whole barrel of beer! ”

“ And it is right what Hugh Morgan says, ” another struck in. “ That Ned Kerr, he know Wales as well as I know my two hands! I have let-ter from my cousin Thomas Thomas in Towyn, and he say they buy lot-t of alders up the Dysynni two years ago of Mr. Llewelyn Jones of Abergynolwyn, and set up a hut in the 'ood,

and make their clog soles, and pay six-pence a foot for the trees."

"He set up more than a hut at Llanyglo, whatever!"

"Indeed they do no such thing! The Hafod Unos belong to the old days. There iss no new Hafod Unos I don't know this how many years!"

"All the old things was new things once, Hugh Morgan."

Then, as if all at once they saw anew that house so magically sprung up out of the sand, there fell a silence. Howell Gruffydd might make his jests about taking a larger shop and forming a Limited Company, but the hard fact remained, that aliens had squatted down at Llanyglo while they had slept, and, by force or process of law, might be difficult to turn out again. Howell's jocosity subsided; among the children's forms and benches they took counsel together; and when, at half-past ten, John Pritchard's eldest lad came in with the news that one of the Kerrs had departed along the Porth Neigr road, while the other three kept guard over what they had won, they drew closer together still, and spoke in low tones of boycott.

Then suddenly somebody asked what Mr. Tudor Williams of Ponteglwys would say, and the quick little outburst of "Yes, indeed," "Well said," "Mr. Tudor Williams have some-thing to say," showed how pertinent the observation was considered. For Mr. Tudor Williams, the Member, would be able to tell them, if anybody could, whether the Hafod Unos was countenanced by the Law, and whether the intruders could be served with notice to quit. His promised visit now took on an added urgency.

"It is a pit-ty Mr. Williams fall out with Squire

Wynne," Hugh Morgan remarked. "It will be the Squire who will have to give them notice, whatever."

"They quarrel one day outside the Court at Porth Neigr."

"But indeed, Howell Gruffydd, Mr. Tudor Williams was in the right — it was about the Tithes, and the Tithe iss a wick-ked system ——"

"Aw-w-w, but the Welss Members they alter all that very soon!"

"But the Squire and the Bis-sop of St. Asaph iss great friends ——"

"Indeed that Bis-sop of St. Asaph he look at a Chap-pil like as if it wass not worth his eyesight!"

Dafydd Dafis, who sat on a child's bench, looking moodily at the floor, had not spoken yet. He gave a quick glance up, and then looked down again.

"The Church iss a great robber," he muttered within his moustache. . . .

They discussed questions of ecclesiastical polity. . . .

"It iss a great robber," said Dafydd Dafis, again resuming his former attitude.

Then Howell Gruffydd rose, and one or two others followed his example. There was the day's work to be done. Soon all moved to the door, but before going about their businesses they went to take another look at that astonishing house.

But they looked only from a distance. If they had assumed that the Kerrs, having worked all night, would now be sleeping, they were wrong. They could see them, three of them, still busily walling, filling, shovelling out sand.

"They try to finiss before Sunday," Hugh Morgan said.

But big John Pritchard glared sternly at him.

“They care noth-thing for Sunday, those ones,” he said. “That other one will have gone for more beer.” And he added, in solemn tones, “It iss a den of li-ons!”

The fencing dispute had now sunk into insignificance.

It quickly appeared, even as John Pritchard had said, that the Kerrs cared nothing for Sunday. At a quarter to ten on the morning of that day, Howell Gruffydd, in his tight black frock-coat and bowler hat, passing up the sandy gully on his way to the Methodist Chapel, heard sounds of carousing. He turned aside to look. The door of the Hafod stood open, and a second barrel of beer, together with provisions and some sticks of furniture, had been fetched during the night. Tommy, the youngest of the Kerrs, was already drunk and singing. The eldest of them, seeing Howell Gruffydd, gave him an insolently familiar nod, as if he had as much right to be there as anybody else.

“Cold mornin’,” he said. “Are ye coming in to hev’ a tot?”

Howell turned away.

After service, Howell encountered John Pritchard. John, too, had heard that godless levity from afar. Others gathered round them by the gap in the thymy earth-wall, and John raised his voice on high. It shook with bitter zeal.

“We hear them in the Chap-pil, in the mid-dle of prayers, singing!” he cried. “On a Sunday morning they sing; they sing ‘*Thomas, make Room for your Uncle!*’ I said it was a den of li-ons, but indeed no li-ons ever behave so s’ock-kingly! They sing ‘*Thomas, make Room for your Uncle,*’ in the mid-dle of prayers, like if it was out of the belly of hell!”

Dafydd Dafis, whose head for a day and a half had

drooped like a wet head of corn, gave a quick gleaming glance.

“They not build it any more quick than it can be pulled down again,” he said quickly. “They come out of the house sometime to work, I think. They not gentry with lot of money, whatever.”

And that was true. The Kerrs could hardly earn their living by drinking beer and having continually to mount guard over the house they had made.

“There will be no peace in Llanyglo now till Mr. Tudor Williams has been.”

Dafydd Dafis’s head drooped again.

“Indeed we do not need Mr. Tudor Williams for this,” he muttered under his breath.

And the Kerrs themselves? Did they suppose they could plant themselves thus in the enemy’s midst and not meet with hostile entertainment?

For this we may perhaps go once more to the gentleman without whose friendly help the *Llanyglo Guide* would have been done quite as well as it needed to be, and in half the time.

“It’s difficult to say, for two reasons,” this gentleman said. “In the first place, the humour of some of these Lancashire fellows is such an incalculable thing; you never know how far they will carry it, nor how soon it will end in black eyes and bloody noses. And in the second place, there was that humanitarian scatterbrain, Armfield. I believe myself that probably Armfield had already told Ned Kerr that there *would* be work presently. . . .

“Of course, you’ve heard what Armfield’s scheme was. The Syndicate had decided not to rectify any more errors of Providence about the disposition of coal and manganese; they only wanted to clear out altogether,

leaving somebody else 'holding the baby'— I believe that's the expression. Their idea was simplicity itself: to buy land at a shilling and sell it again at ten; but they didn't express it quite so nakedly. That was where Terry Armfield came in — to dress the enterprise up and make it attractive. As long as he enabled them to cut their loss they didn't care what he did with Llanyglo.

“And there was nothing really wrong with the scheme, except that Terry was twenty years before his time, and naturally had to suffer for it. I think he called it '*The Thelema Estate Development Company*,' and nowadays it would be called a Garden City. And if Terry hadn't Edward Garden's sense of the line of least resistance, you must remember that he hadn't Edward Garden's 'inside' information either. He had nothing but that ecstatic power of persuading people. And he did persuade them. I doubt if half a dozen of the people he sold to ever saw the place. Two of them did, though, two brothers, in the produce line. They went down, and came back again, and quietly sold out, keeping strictly to Terry's representations; and I believe they warned Terry then that if he wasn't careful he'd be getting into trouble. I asked them what they'd been thinking of to let themselves be persuaded by a hare-brained enthusiast like that. They told me it was all very well for me to talk *now*. They knew perfectly well all the time that it was only one of Terry's dreams of a better and a brighter world, but they bought for all that, and so did crowds of others. Terry didn't admit a single difficulty. He talked about angels and the higher life. He talked about Pugin and the soul's need for seasons of contemplation and repose. He talked about the air and the sea and the mountains

and the Trwyn, and he made it out to be Llanyglo's chief merit that it took a whole day to get there. . . . And so on. To cut it short, they were to do their own building, but Terry, as vendor, undertook the rest — laying out certain roads, draining and lighting them, I believe the building of a sort of public hall, and so forth. I don't think he said anything about the Chapels.

“And that (to get back where we started from) is probably the reason the Kerrs stood by.”

Whether Dafydd Dafis would have watched the Kerrs out of the Hafod, or, failing that, whether he would have pulled it down over their heads, is hardly worth debating; for, as it happened, that very Sunday night there befell something that for the time being had all the effect of a declared truce between the hamlet and its invaders. Something deeper and more solemn than the machinations of man took a hand in the making of Llanyglo. This was the wind. It began to get up at about three o'clock that afternoon; all day there had been a swell; and Dafydd Dafis and others, returning from Howell Gruffydd's house (where a second letter to Mr. Tudor Williams Ponteglwys had been written, as urgent as Eesaac Oliver's pen could make it), saw all four of the brothers on the roof, trying to secure the tarpaulin in which the wind volleyed; their roof-slates were not expected till the following Wednesday. The ground was a blurr of flying sand; the sea resembled a tossing fleece as far as the eye could see; and from moment to moment the waves, breaking over the Trwyn, rose in slow, gigantic fountains, fell again, and then came the roar. The four men clung like limpets to the roof, crouching until the worst gusts were past and

then resuming their hammering. They were trying to nail the covering down, using pieces of wood as washers to prevent the material from ripping.

Suddenly Dafydd Dafis, looking up under his brows, saw Ned Kerr pause with his hammer lifted and peer out to sea. Then, without moving his head, Ned put up his hand and appeared to be shouting something to the others. All four looked, and so did the men of Llanyglo, but from the ground below they could see nothing.

Then, all in a moment, Ned Kerr gave a scramble and a spring, came down like a bundle into a mound of soft sand, and was followed tumblingwise by the others. There was a rip and a crack, and the released tarpaulin was a hundred yards away, flapping grotesquely over the sandhills. Ned was up again in an instant, and as he passed Dafydd Dafis at a run he shouted a single word in Welsh:

“Llongdrylliad!”

It was a wreck.

The boats by the short thumb of a jetty had not been used for a week, and lay high up the beach. Could they have got them through that boiling of white sea and brown sand there was a towering ridge to be seen beyond, maned with spray, that rushed forward and burst only to show another in the same place. No more than one at a time could be seen. The boats were open boats, and night was coming on. Small wonder there seemed little to do but pray.

But Ned Kerr shouted another word.—“*Bâd!*”

From the top of the Hafod he had seen a ship's boat.

The next moment he and Dafydd Dafis had each a shoulder to Hugh Morgan's boat, and William Morgan, the three remaining Kerrs, and another man, were

hauling. All save the youngest Kerr continued to tumble aboard as the boat lifted. He tried to struggle after it, but was overturned, and they dragged him out and turned him upside down to pour the water out of him.

They have a lifeboat now at Llanyglo, *The Ratchet*, presented and maintained by the town of that name; but that night the men of Lancashire and the men of Llanyglo went out in one of the half-dozen open boats. They put her into the brown, and a moment later the water had slipped from under her and she sat down on the sand, with every plank started. They got ashore again as best they could, and raced for another boat and more oars. They put out again. They dare not use the wooden jetty, of which only the beginning could be seen. The first boat was already matchwood. A sea crawled up the Trwyn almost as far as the Light. They inspected its ravage the next day. It stood as a record for many years.

Then the boat passed the brown, and stood out to that pale wall smoking with spray. The wall came on and broke with a crash that shook the shore. A woman gave a shrill scream . . . then they saw the boat again —

It seemed madness to think that that open boat would be safer out beyond —

After that, though they watched, they saw nothing.

Then the Trwyn Light opened its eye, two reds and a white. All Llanyglo was gathered on the beach, and none thought of going to Chapel. Night fell; the sky became clear as black ice; the dim seas resembled a lair of white bears at play. Seven o'clock passed, and eight. . . . Already in folks' minds the grim thought was born; it might have been worse. They had dragged

Hugh Morgan back as the second boat had pushed off, and none of the Llanyglo men was married. Whether the three Kerrs were married or not nobody knew.

Nine o'clock came. . . .

Blodwen Gruffydd saw the return first, if, indeed, that vague speck lost in the grey combings were they. Again the wave came on, and another hideous range lifted its grey ridge. . . . By a miracle, it boiled far away to right and left, but rolled, a grey-dappled dead weight, under the boat. Already half a dozen men with a rope were waist-deep in the water. . . .

Then, as the boat crawled on its oars like an insect, another crest rose, tilted them so that man fell on man, and a man came out. . . .

They at the rope were swept out by the backwash to meet them. . . .

And after all, they had come back empty-handed. They had seen neither ship nor boat.

But (and this, in this tale of Llanyglo and of those who made it and were made by it, is the point), an hour later Dafydd Dafis, opening his eyes for the first time since he had been hauled out of the water, said something in Welsh to John Pritchard, who bent over him. Translated it ran:

"I would not pull that one's house down."

Then he closed his eyes again.

As far as the Hafod Unos was concerned, Mr. Tudor Williams's visit now seemed superfluous.

VII

THE MEMBER

OSTENSIBLY, Mr. Tudor Williams came to Llanyglo to assist at a Sasiwn, which is a gathering very much like the Love Feasts of other parts of the country (indeed, if memory serves, Mr. Wesley gave these assemblies for prayer and mutual consolation the latter name as far north in Wales as Builth — but then Mr. Wesley did not speak Welsh). Neither the fencing dispute nor the question of the Hafod Unos had taken nominal precedence of this. But Mr. Tudor Williams's visit was also something more. He was a Member returning to his own constituency — exalted, yet their servant, familiar with the great ones of the land, yet by their favour. For that reason they liked him to bring the evidences of his greatness back with him.

Mr. Tudor Williams did so, and handsomely. He was a small nimble man with black brows and a ragged silvery moustache, and a very erect and conscious carriage of the head. He wore a silk hat, a turned-down collar with a flat black bow, a frockcoat with voluminous lapels of watered silk, grey trousers, and new black kid gloves. He drove from Porth Neigr in the carriage that had been lent him by a political supporter, and alighted at the gap opposite John Pritchard's farm. They would have run forward to greet him, but a certain awe of his clothes and equipage combined with their

own dignity as makers and unmakers of such as he to keep them where they stood, in a semicircle across the road.

But if they were at one and the same time a little intimidated and filled out with pride in him, Mr. Tudor Williams knew no hesitation. He sprang down from the carriage, grasped John Pritchard by the hand, and then, not content with that, patted him all up the arm as far as the shoulder and across the breast with the other hand, as if he conferred invisible decorations on him. His eyes were moist, but glad greetings flowed from his tongue, in an accent that would have put the most diffident speaker of English at his ease.

“Well, John Pritchard! Well, well! Indeed you have not grown any less! A little man like me, I hardly reach up to your shoulder! Aw-w-w, you look splendid! I was spik-king of you a few days ago to the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs — but dear me, here am I neglecting the ladies — I tell you presently — How are you, Mrs. Gruffydd? This young man is never Eesaac Oliver! Aw-w-w, how he grows! Did you write the let-ter to me, Eesaac Oliver? That’s the style! Education, knowledge — it is a grand thing! — Now, Dafydd Dafis! And how is the harp? You sing me *Y Gadlys* by and by:

‘*Mae cynhwrf yn y ceunant,
Ar derfyn dydd y gad —*’

— dear, dear, you have to go away before you can come home again! There is nothing like this over there; there is not the sym-pathy; as I was saying to the Member for Caermarthen, Mr. Hughes Caegwynion, not three, four days ago, ‘You get no sym-pathy from England and the Englishman’ — and indeed you do

not.— Here comes Howell Gruffydd, run-ning (indeed he runs like a deer, Mrs. Gruffydd!).— Now, Howell Gruffydd, you miss the train if you don't look sharp (he's making so much money he cannot leave the shop for a min-nit!).— Now, my old friend William Morgan! How is the rheumatics? — How are you, Hugh? — Is this your youngest, Mrs. Roberts? Hwhat! Another since! Aw-w-w — and you more like an elder sister than a mother! . . . And there is the Trwyn, just the same ——”

He was staying the night with John Pritchard, and the two moved away to the house, the others following a yard or two behind. Mr. Tudor Williams advanced to ancient Mrs. Pritchard's chair, took the hand that resembled a dead bird's foot, and shouted in her ear:

“ You see I do not lose a min-nit before I come to see you, Mrs. Pritchard!” he cried in Welsh. (“ Indeed she is a wonderful old 'ooman!) — How many grandchildren have you now, Mrs. Pritchard?” (The old woman nodded her aged head.) “ Great-grandchildren! *No-o-o!* Think of that! But I think you all live for ever at Llanyglo. It is not like London. If I could take bagsfull of this air back with me I make my for-tune! — Now, Miss Pritchard, I think I must have offended you, you are so long in spik-king to me! And how is all in school? I tell you press-ently something straight from the Board of Ed-u-ca-tion for you to try. You whisper a subject in the scholar's ear as he comes in at the door, and he walk straight to the middle of the room, no time for think-king, and speak for five minutes about it! That will make them ready speakers, hwhat? That will accustom them to public life and speaking in the Chapel? But I tell you later.— Now, my old

friend John, if I could wash my hands before sitting down to a cup of tea — then we will talk ——”

He was shown into the best bedroom, with the cork-framed funeral-cards and the cardboard watch-pockets on the walls, and the sound of his moving about and pouring out water and spluttering as he washed his face could be heard by those who waited below. Then he descended again and sat down.

“ Well,” he said by and by, from his place where he sat at the table alone, they respectfully yet proprietorially watching him eat and drink his tea, “ now tell me about those matters in the letter you wrote. . . . I mean the other matters. . . .”

But let us, before we pass to the other matters, look at the company that watched Mr. Tudor Williams eat.

First there was John Pritchard, sitting on the other side of the table with his hands upon his knees, and now and then turning his body a little aside and bowing his back to cough. There was John, stern religionist, believing in God and Disendowment; obstinate, dull, just, unsmiling; as ready for the Day of Judgment as if it had been the audit-day of the accounts he kept as principal trustee of the Baptist Chapel. For all that he was so rooted in Llanyglo that he had never travelled farther than Porth Neigr in the whole of his life, he was as ardent a supporter of Missionary Endeavour abroad as his voice was powerful at the Sasiwn at home. He watched Mr. Tudor Williams's plate, and with his thumb made signs for his daughter to replenish it.

Next, there was Howell Gruffydd, with his pale and studious son, Eesaac Oliver. You might have been sure even then that, should Llanyglo ever grow, Howell Gruffydd's fortune would grow with it. Howell considered a good penny worth the putting into his pocket,

and, as if his apron (which, however, he had now left behind at the shop) had made half a housewife of him, he cared nothing, so it brought in money, whether he did a man's labour or washed up the dishes or black-leaded the grate. He could not read, but if at Porth Neigr a stranger chanced to ask him the way, he would smile and reply, "There is the signpost," allowing it to be understood that his questioner might read as well as he himself. Howell had his inner dream. It was of a shop with two large windows, and a bell inside the door, and brightly varnished showcards, and pyramids of tinned salmon, and peas within the window that should suggest the noses of children flattened against the pane, and handbills distributed in the streets, and two assistants, and a son at College, who should read for two, and perhaps — who knew? — sit while his constituents watched him eat his tea — Mr. Eesaac Oliver Gruffydd, M.P.

Then, with his cap in his hands and his feet shifting nervously, there was Dafydd Dafis, next to Eesaac Oliver, on the sofa. Should purchases and rumoured purchases of land prove to be a portent, Dafydd had all to lose and nothing to gain by change. With that soft cruelty of his of which the hard and more profoundly sentimental Englishman knows nothing, Dafydd was at least disinterested. The Kerrs he had forborne to harm, but he only hated them the more on that account. He himself would not have killed one of the blue and primrose butterflies that in the summer hovered over the Llanyglo buffets of wild thyme, and he could not understand a country that said it was fond of animals and yet, like these Lancashire men, hunted rats with terriers and coursed hares with dogs. Alone of that nation he had for a time loved delicate little Minetta

Garden, and had told her stories of fairies and had sung *Serch Hudol* and *Mentra Gwen* to her; but Minetta had gone. All the things for which Dafydd Dafis cared had gone, or were going, and Dafydd was lonely. He told his harp so, with those warped and stealing fingers, and the harp made music of his pain. All that Dafydd would gain by change would be memories that became ever the more poignant the more they were attenuated, and the less the world cared for him and his unprofitable life.

Passing constantly between Mr. Tudor Williams and the saucepan where the eggs boiled, or the plate in the fender where the lightcakes kept hot, was Miss Nancy (*née* Nansi) Pritchard, schoolmistress and virtual custodian of the Post Office. The development of Llanyglo, did that ever come to pass, would be a good thing for Nancy, for otherwise there was none in Llanyglo to marry her, and to domestic service elsewhere she could not have stooped. She was tall and plump and ruddy, with black hair and black-lashed blue eyes, and in her conversation she gave the preference to the longer words. She had been to school in Bangor, wore the longest skirts in Llanyglo, and between her and her father's guest was the bond of their common superiority to everybody else there. She was a *partie*, for John Pritchard was well-to-do; but for whom? Apparently for nobody whom Llanyglo had yet seen.

The remaining spectators, with the exception of old Mrs. Pritchard, who resembled a mummy rather than a spectator, partook in varying degrees of these same characteristics; and there at the table sat Mr. Tudor Williams, M.P., of Ponteglwys, one of his eyes aflow with tears of sensibility while the other was glued to the main chance; Baptist, nationalist, and arguer by meta-

phor and analogy; an elocutionist, and a maker of elocutionists by that process of education that consists of giving a scholar a subject and bidding him straightway speak for five minutes upon it; and, above all, ever and again suggesting, by slight gesture or quick glance, that his secret thought was that there, in cap or corduroys, but for the Grace of God, went Mr. Tudor Williams of Ponteglwys. . . .

At last he put up his hand, refusing to eat more.

“No more, no more indeed! It is the best bread and butter I have tasted since I was here before, but I should be ill in my stomach.—Dear me, John Pritchard, the happy hours I have spent in this room! ‘*Mid Pleasures and Palaces*’—indeed there is tears in my eyes when I see the dresser with the plates on it, and the jugs, and Mrs. Pritchard’s Bible in the window, just the same as when I was a boy!—Well, I have had a splendid tea at all events, and if you will excuse me a minute I will return thanks for it. . . . Now, my friends! ——”

Five minutes later, Mr. Tudor Williams, not so near to the Kerrs’ Hafod that he had the appearance of specially watching it, nor yet so far from it but that he could see Ned Kerr and his brother Sam setting a rough window-sash into position, was once more shaking hands and patting shoulders and exchanging greetings with such of the men and women and children of Llanyglo as he had not yet seen.

And now that they had got him there they hardly knew what they wanted of him. That building exploit of the Kerrs having thrust the Inclosures Dispute a good deal into the background, and Dafydd Dafis’s honourable if sullen refusal to injure men who had risked their lives with him having given that exploit

itself a kind of condonation, it seemed as if their Member had merely come to a Sasiwn after all. But land had changed hands: they had a vague sense of impending change and of the discomfort of change; and, as they answered their Member's questions, the very presence in their midst of this man who moved behind the scenes of the drama of large events accentuated this feeling.

"What is he like, this one?" Mr. Tudor Williams asked, gently yet absent-mindedly patting big John Pritchard's back as he stooped to cough. They had been speaking of Terry Armfield.

They described Terry as he had appeared to them in the Court at Porth Neigr.

"Is he taking over any other land?" . . .

You would not have supposed, from the way in which Mr. Tudor Williams, M.P., asked the question that he merely sought to know how much *they* knew. And it had not occurred to Llanyglo that these transfers of land might be, not an end, but only a beginning. Yet Mr. Tudor Williams had good, if private reasons, for knowing that this very land might soon be more than merely worth acquiring. . . . He was not deceiving them. It pleased them to think that their Member was the repository of weighty secrets, and he was merely indulging this simple and legitimate liking. But already he intended to go to Liverpool in order to find out what this Syndicate's plans really were. He wanted to know whether the Syndicate, in its turn, was aware of something else, something still very secret indeed, so secret that five minutes at certain keyholes might have been worth many thousands of pounds. . . .

"And this Hafod Unos — on whose land is it erected?" he next asked.

He made a little grimace when they told him, on Squire Wynne's.

"Then perhaps he will let it stand; he is cracked in his head about old customs, and antiquities, and suchlike foolishness, when there is great work waiting to be done. It is not our business if he likes to let these people squat upon his land."

But here John Pritchard interposed heavily.

"But it is our business if they sing '*Thomas, make Room for your Uncle*' in the middle of prayers," he said.

"No-o-o!" exclaimed Mr. Tudor Williams, shocked. Perhaps also he wished to gain a little time; he had no wish to call upon Squire Wynne, either about this or anything else. "Don't tell me they did that!" he added.

"Indeed, they did," said John quickly.

"Aw-w-w! — But it is a Liberal maxim, John, and Radical, too, that force is no remedy. In my opinion our friend Dafydd here ——" he put his arm affectionately about Dafydd Dafis's waist, "— was a lit-tle head-strong about burning the fences."

"I will not burn their house," said Dafydd sullenly. (By the way, had the case been altered, it is doubtful whether the Kerrs would have done as much for him.)

"Well — we can always take what the doctor told the man who wanted information for noth-thing to take — advice," said Mr. Tudor Williams.

"It would be better to see Mr. Wynne first," said John Pritchard. "If one comes others may come, and indeed I never saw such behaviour, no, not in a den of lions!"

They continued to discuss the matter, while, before their eyes, the Kerrs fitted their window-sash.

Yet it was curious to note how, within the bond of their passionate, if loquacious nationalism, each man was jealously for himself. It was not that their democracy was more conspicuously lacking in democrats than are other democracies; perhaps it was rather that the Welshman recognises two ties and two ties only — the tie of unity against the foreigner, and the private claim of his strong family affections. Between these two things is his void and vulnerable place. He has not set up for himself the Englishman's stiff and serviceable and systematised falsity of Compromise, that has no justification save that it works. He has his age-long tradition, but no daily rule that can (and indeed must) be applied without question. Each of his acts is his first act, and so a retail act. Because his hypocrisy lacks the magnificent scope of that of the Saxon, he bears the odium of a personal stealthiness. Thus, perhaps, it comes about that while too strict an adherence to the letter is the Englishman's ever-present danger, for his brother Celt the spirit slayeth. Noble dreams, petty acts; and here, if a little obscurely, may be hidden the reason why, when he seeks his fortune in London, his greatest successes are the minor successes of drapery and milk. . . .

“Well,” said Mr. Tudor Williams at last, “Wynne is a man of no ideas. He is only a pettifogging country Squire, whose views on the Land Question are obsolete *in tot-to*. But if he harbours men that are a nuisance, as John Pritchard says, perhaps it would be better if I went to see him —”

Nevertheless, he had no intention whatever of doing so. The truth was that the Squire's views on the Land Question were too obsolete altogether. They were so obsolete that he had sold when (as first Edward Garden

had known, and now Mr. Tudor Williams, M.P., knew) he ought to have held; and it was for Mr. Tudor Williams to profit by his error if he could, rather than to call his attention to it. He was very far from being a wealthy man.

VIII

THELEMA

BECAUSE Terry Armfield, believing in his idea, would not have abated one jot of it for all the money in Liverpool, therefore he got all the money he wanted. This — alas! — is not optimism, nor a hardy belief that merit infallibly meets with its deserts in this world; it merely means that a number of businessmen with rudimentary consciences were willing to pay a kind of hedging-premium on the off-chance of being, after all, on the side of Terry and the angels. It is astonishing how often your visionary can get money out of your man of affairs when another man of affairs would fail.

And, even as the man who chatted to the author of the *Sixpenny Guide* said, Terry was only a few years before his time. The things he dreamed of have not come to pass yet, but they are confidently promised to-morrow. As happy as the day was long, he was merely setting up the City that is not built with hands, and lighting it with the Light that never was. And if the "*Thelema Estate Development Company*" had done nothing else, it did, at any rate, put an end to that dispute that had begun when Dafydd Dafis had pulled down fences and burned them in his beautiful Red Dragon of a bonfire.

But, over and above that, it did leave its little mark on Llanglo — a fleeting mark, laughable, bathetic,

sad, hauntingly vacant, and lunatic (as Mr. Tudor Williams would have said) "*in tot-to.*" Come to that little office near St. George's Hall, Liverpool, and see Terry Armfield in the closing stages of his minding of Llanyglo.

He not only conceived his Thelema; he drew the plans of it as well. He drew them on drawing-paper, on tracing-paper, on note-paper and bill-heads and the backs of envelopes. A paper-weight, with a knob in the shape of a clenched fist grasping a short staff, kept half a hundred of his hasty drafts from flying off again into the air that gave them birth. And he added to them day by day, almost hour by hour. . . . Forty or forty-five or fifty houses, say, each with its little plot for private meditation and repose, yet sharing in common among them a spacious pleasauncé where friend should meet friend and none but friends should come — that was the idea. A fair wide Way, with the mountains looking down its perspective to where gentle steps led down to the tawny sand — that was the idea. A wall all about it, or a ha-ha perhaps, not as against trespass, but as a symbol that here was an Isle that the tides of the care and of the trouble of the world did not invade — a shining and galleried chamber where light and happy laughter should rise to the groining of the roof (dim blue with gilt stars), and should echo and linger there as if the fane itself whispered — that was the idea. None of it existed, none of it was ever likely to exist; but without some such dreaming our life on earth is little worth. The people who put up the real money for it laughed at it, and laughed at Terry when he had gone, but humoured him while he was there as a nuisance, but a gentle one. If they lost their money there would, at any rate, be a good many of them in

company, the land was exceedingly cheap, and they need not begin to build upon it till they pleased. Besides, by taking shares in his Thelema they had bought Terry off. When he came with his other wild and beautiful schemes they could say, "No, no, Terry, we'll see how Thelema turns out first," and pass him on to somebody else. That alone was worth the money.

Then there came to Terry one day a man who not only did not laugh at him, but grasped him by the hand, patted him all up the arm and across the breast as if he conferred invisible decorations upon him, gave Thelema his blessing, and said, in moved tones, "Indeed it is splen-did — splen-did — without vis-ion the people perish-eth." He told Terry that his name was Tudor Williams, and that he was the parliamentary representative of the constituency a portion of which Terry and the gods on high were developing. He did not ask outright for anything. He told Terry that, while he himself was a good Radical, believing that God made the land for the people, nevertheless, in this imperfect world things had to be done a lit-tle at a time, and his principal objection to the (temporary) private ownership of land was that it was too often in the wrong hands. If it could be put into the right hands much of the ini-quit-ty would disappear, whatever. Then, when he came to inform Terry that in his opinion he could be of great use to the Estate, he told him also that he was far from being a wealthy man, and that his usefulness must be set off as against the cost of any interest Terry might think fit to confer upon him. . . ."

"Look you," he said, "the conditions of labour are peculiar, and things that would be easy for me you might find a lit-tle diff-fi-cult. I do not say you would, and indeed I am a good democrat, and do not believe in one

law for the ritss and another for the poor; but nowa-days, when every man has his rights and his vote . . . well, without a word here and a word there it might be a lit-tle diff-fi-cult. . . .”

And Terry, who was quite acute enough to see this, asked Mr. Tudor Williams to come again.

When Mr. Tudor Williams came to see Terry for the third time, Terry pressed him to accept a seat on the Board. But Mr. Tudor Williams put up a deprecat-ing hand.

“Aw-w-w, no!” he said. “Indeed it is very good of you, and I am very pleased you show so much confi-dence in me, but it would not do. There is my public position to consider. Indeed I would rather have a nominee. It is hard to make people understand a prop-per motive. If the time was ripe for it I would nationalise all land, yes indeed I would, but if it must be privately owned for a lit-tle while longer it is better that it should be in the trust of men like you and me for the public good. There is as many different kinds of landowning as there is of landowners. That pet-ti-fog-ging country squire, Wynne, he is repre-sen-ta-tive of all that is worst in a vic-ious sys-tem; he has no more vis-ion than that chair you sit on now; but we are not like that. I have not often found a sym-pathy like yours; indeed there has been tears in my eyes while you have talked. . . . But I will have a nominee. It will be bet-ter. And I will see you get your labour. There is John Jones, Contractor, Porth Neigr. He may even be willing to pay a lit-tle commission. We shall not quarrel about that.— But I am bet-ter off the Board.”

Very curiously, he was not the only one who seemed a little shy about being put on the Board. Others displayed an equal bashfulness. This puzzled Terry.

But it never puzzled him for long at a time. Always a fresh inspiration sent him off into his cloudland again. It was about that time that he acquired his second slice of Llanyglo, a tract adjoining the first and running down to that shore that Copley Fielding depicted with such accomplishment, elegance, and taste. And he took with that second piece of land a responsibility greater than that he had assumed when he had merely cajoled money out of the pockets of men who had known his tea-clipping father and whose fathers had known his privateering great-grandfather. Briefly, by enlarging his enterprise, Terry threw away the immediate advantage of his personal idealism and charm. The thing went to allotment shorn of his peculiar magnetism. He received money that would not, merely on the score that they liked him, be indulgently written off by those who would see that money no more.

His Prospectus is extant. Edward Garden's unfinished house came into it, and an affiliated interest, "*Porth Neigr Omnibuses, Ltd.*," about which Mr. Tudor Williams knew something. There were great swathes about the natural beauties of the situation, and lesser ones (the Syndicate pruned them down behind Terry's back) about the Thelema Idea. And there were a number of other things that are impossible, yet facts in the amazing History of Flotation. It is no good saying these things cannot happen when they happen daily. Had you or I bought shares in the "*Thelema Estate Development Company, Limited*," we should merely have bought, you and I, shares in that moonshine that poor, gentle, rapturous, cat's-paw Terry Armfield drew with freehand and French curves on his bits of paper and presently spread out in such a lunatic fashion over the sandhills of Llanyglo. Come, before we leave

this dim chapter of the twilight of Llanyglo's foreboding, and see what Terry did.

Starting at right angles from the Porth Neigr road, a couple of hundred yards short of John Pritchard's farm, there runs straight down to the shore a street of rather more than a quarter of a mile in length. Crossing this street in the middle runs another street, not so long, but unfinished. These two streets intersect in an open space or circus perhaps a hundred yards in diameter. The first street is called Delyn Avenue, because of the mountain that commands it. The second one is called Trwyn Way. The central circus is called by the names of the four Crescents it comprises. Farther back from the intersecting points are other streets. They also are named.

But do not suppose that these streets and Crescents and Avenues and Ways are streets in any ordinary sense. They are twenty-two and thirty-five foot roads, metalled, crowned, drained, and with a good stone kerb running parallel on either side. But there are no houses. There is not even a pavement, no, not a vestige of one, flagged, macadamed, cobbled, nor of any other description. There are no standards for gas or electric light; there are no standards even for the names of the thoroughfares — for you can hardly call those things standards — those low wooden boards, rather like the "*Please Keep off the Grass*" notices in a public park, that inform you that this is Delyn Avenue or that that is Trwyn Way. Exactly as it was all drawn on Terry Armfield's tracing-paper and envelopes and memo-heads, so it is now drawn on the Llanyglo sandhills, with strips of stone kerbing for pencil lines and the wind-blown sand where his india-rubber has passed. Lie down on the sandhills with your eyes at the level of the kerbs,

and, save for those eighteen-inch-high street name-boards, all disappears. Or if you care to climb the Trwyn you can see it all rather well from there. . . .

There you are. . Just a little patch of strapwork in the middle of the waste. Or like a rather large gridiron somebody has thrown away. And, if you are capable of seeing what Terry saw, namely all the things that are not there and that never will be there, then that little grid of laid-down and abandoned streets has a curiously mocking effect. You imagine the ghosts of Terry's Thelemites moving noiselessly there, passing to and from their non-existent habitations. They are going, friendly ghost taking friendly ghost by the hand, to that groined and lofty chamber of Terry's dream, where the faint echoes of laughter linger in the roof of dim blue with gilt stars. They are going to walk in Terry's closes and courts and arbours, happy in that the sorrows and pains and substantialities of the world touch them not in their retreat. They are going down Delyn Avenue, to where the broad and gentle steps descend to the yellow shore. And all about them, but only to be seen if you can see what Terry saw (otherwise you will see only the sand and the wild thyme and the sulphur butterflies and the blue), are Calaer and Anatole, Crière and Hesperia, Mesembrine and Arctic, which are the six towers of that Place with the great gate where bigots and hypocrites and defrauded and whining shareholders enter not, nor the violent Huns of the world of business nor the cruel Ostrogoths of commerce, but only the spruce and noble devotees of the Best, the Terrys before their time.

But when the wind gets up, then the sand blows over it all, and John Pritchard or somebody else, catching his foot against the unseen kerb, comes down his length into the middle of Terry's lovely and desired Place.

But the men and women of Llanyglo are beginning to know their way about this phantom town, and none other, save the Gardens (whose house is now finished), and a friend or so of the Gardens' in the summer, ever comes there. The Kerrs, however, still have their Hafod, which they inhabit together when they are not away buying and cutting alders and shaping them into clog-soles with the free-hinged knife in the little canvas hut. And among the business-men of Liverpool the whole thing is still a rich joke.—“ Well, have you started building that house of yours in Wales yet ? ” a man who has not bought will ask a man who did ; and this one will reply, “ Oh, I'm thinking about it,” or, “ You must come down there and stop with me,” or some other put-off. And it was rich in the extreme when, one day, the man at whose expense the joke was made took the jester by the button, smiled, and whispered something confidential. . . . “ What ! ” gasped the jester. “ You've sold ! . . . Wherever did you find him ? In Manchester ? Ha, ha, ha ! Splendid ! That's a dig in the ribs for Manchester ! — I should like to see his face when he sees it ! . . . A pity about poor Armfield, though — he'll catch snuff —— ”

For Terry had been refused bail.

PART TWO

I

RAILHEAD

BUT something was coming to Llanyglo.

As Edward Garden might have said, looking at this something under his glasses and over his glasses as it crept slowly up out of the east — as Edward Garden might have said, looking at it again and yet again, and then gazing mildly and mistrustfully through the glasses at you, it appeared to be a railway.

At any rate, if it was not coming to Llanyglo it was coming within three miles of it.

As if a snail should leave behind it a track, not of slime, but of new iron, grey at first, then red with rust, but soon to be bright again, so it came on; and in other respects also it resembled a snail. It carried, for example, its lodging with it. And it put forward sensitive and intelligent antennæ as it sought its food thirty miles away down the coast — manganese. It left the junction half a mile beyond Porth Neigr, and it was going to Abercelyn.

The lodging that the snail carried with it was called Railhead. Seen from a distance of a couple of miles it resembled a small excoriation on the face of the land; seen nearer it resolved itself into a town of wood and corrugated iron, with stockades of creosoted sleepers and trenches of earth and ramparts of ballast and metal for

the laying of the permanent way. There were superintendents' offices and the sheds of clerks of works; there were forges and stables and strings of waggons and a telegraph cabin; there were huts and pumping-stations and cranes, stationary and travelling, and a gas-plant; and there were watchmen's boxes and the temporary dwellings of hundreds of men. By day these could be seen, spread out on the level or clustering about the embankments as the flies clustered about the treacled strings and fly-papers Howell Gruffydd hung up in his shop in Llanyglo; at night the oncoming snail seemed phosphorescent, its phosphorescence the flares and fires and lamps in cabin-windows and red eyes for danger that appeared when the other shift took over the work from the men of the day. Whistle of construction-engine and roar of dynamite cartridge; hiss of steam and clang of hammers as they fished the joints; rattle of road-metal as it was shot from the carts, and thud of the paviors' rammers; clank of couplings and agonised scream of a circular saw; purr of telephone-bells and the "Hallo!" as the clerk took down the receiver; sough of pumps and bubbling of cauldrons of tar; cries to horses, slish and slap of mortar and the clinking of the trowels; spitting of dinners cooking over the firebaskets, sounds of singing at night; with these and a hundred other noises the snail crept on with a spirit-level inside him — the level that kept him true to the line that had been laid down by staff and chain and theodolite a couple of years before.

And in some respects that something that looked so very much like a railway resembled not so much a snail as a snake. Did you ever see the great python that died lately at the Zoo climb his ragged staff of a tree? Not a joint or section of him but seemed to have that separate

life of each of Dafydd Dafis's fingers when he mourned over his harp. A yard, two yards of the gorgeous waist-thick creature would ripple and flow and roll upwards to the crutch of the stump; another yard would follow, piling ever up and up; and you would wait for the toppling over of the great golden reticulated cable. And then all motion in that portion of the great fake would suddenly cease. Beyond the stump you would become aware that another glittering section was a-crawl, balancing, making fast, ever continuing the ascent. . . . Even so, before and behind Railhead, the work progressed. At a point the construction-engine stopped, the regiment of red and blue shirts and wondrous fore-arms and corduroy would move off, and presently all the life of the line would be five miles ahead, where they dug and built and drained and by and by passed back the word that all was well. So they moved, between the finished and tested line at one point and the warning bell and the dynamite stick at the other; and there was an end of much gorse and heath and of many banks of flowering campion and hassocks of wild thyme.

And, for all this snail with its iron slime was not passing within three miles of Llanyglo, it was bringing the hamlet's appointed destiny with it. It was bringing (though, to be sure, not for some years yet) a passenger-junction where yet only irises and bog-cotton grew and frogs boomed out over the marsh at night. It was bringing sidings where John Pritchard's farthest field of oats now rippled silver-green in the wind. It was bringing a goods-yard and signal-bridges, and sheds and platforms and turntables and a cabrank in front and rows of railwaymen's dwellings behind. It was bringing a different breed of men, a breed that so far Llanyglo knows only in the persons of the four Kerrs. More than

this, it was bringing progress, and sophistication, and wealth for some but nothing for others, and jollity, and vice, and some knowledge that was good and some that Llanyglo would have been no worse without, and always loads, loads, trainloads of white-faced people from the smoky towns. And most of all it was bringing to that vague yet unmistakable town-soul of Llanyglo growth and experience, growth that it could not escape and experience that it must square with those numbered days of its idyllic nonage as best it can. Through growing-pains and wild-oats, through revulsions of young remorse and impossible panaceas of repentance, through shrugging worldliness and cynicism and the forgetfulness that lies in laughter, Llanyglo must pass before it becomes — whatever it is to be. One thing only is certain: it can never again be as it was when Edward Garden first went there. Its wild thyme will remain only in patches on its Trwyn, and its sandhills will be glaucous with the blue sea-holly no more. The black cattle have not much longer in which to pace its shore, and Terry Armfield's gridiron will be forgotten — no *Sixpenny Guide* will point the way down Delyn Avenue nor past his immaterial Crescents along Trwyn Way. Railhead is creeping on. Two of the Kerrs are already working there, the other two have just bought the last of Squire Wynne's alders. Squire Wynne has now no land except that occupied by the Plas and its tangled and mossy and grassy and neglected gardens. "*Porth Neigr Omnibuses, Limited*," is already a serious undertaking, for it will ply between Llanyglo and the nearest point of the line. Howell Gruffydd has an option on the two original cottages that Edward Garden had had matchboarded — he may soon be requiring a larger shop. Compensations will be paid right and left. And there

will soon be a larger assortment of young men for Miss Nancy Pritchard to choose a husband from. . . .

For something is coming to Llanyglo.

Mr. Tudor Williams Ponteglwyys had been clever enough in the matter of the Omnibuses, Limited, nor, for the matter of that, had his cleverness stopped there; but for astuteness he could not hold a candle to Edward Garden. Edward Garden was not a Member of Parliament. As he musingly said when people asked him why he was not, it was out of his line. Therefore, he and his friends had left to others the promotion of the Bill, its steering through Select Committees of both Houses, and the whole conduct of the negotiations that, in their different way, were no less complicated than that concentration of various forces by virtue of which Railhead crept ever slowly forward. To a regiment of lawyers had likewise been left the adjustments under the general Acts to which, on the passing of the Bill, the enterprise had become subject. Members and lawyers alike, those drest in a little brief obedience to the commands of the party whips, these as often as not Members themselves, were virtually the nominees of Edward Garden and his friends. Politics Edward Garden's "line"? . . . To all outward appearances he had no "line" at all. He merely added another emblem to that little cluster of Mercuries and Greyhounds and Winged Orbs that formed the pendant of his watch-chain. It was only when others, full of plans and hope and secrecy, sought "lines" for themselves that they discovered that he had been beforehand with them. To give an instance: When Mr. Tudor Williams, M.P., apparently as representing somebody else, had come forward with an offer to take up the remnants of poor Terry's

Thelema, he had found there were no remnants to take up. To give another instance: When, by carefully engineered good offices and intermediaries, Mr. Tudor Williams had sought a reconciliation with Squire Wynne, and presently had gone to see him, he had found that he had pocketed his pride for nothing — the Squire no longer had a yard of land to sell. In a word, before ever whispers of the Bill had begun to circulate in the lobbies of the House of Commons, the sandhills and oat-fields of Llanyglo had been cut up like a jigsaw puzzle, raffled, dealt in, apportioned, and owned; and, save for his small holding in Thelema, between the Omnibuses at Porth Neigr and manganese at Aberceilyn, there were very few pickings for Mr. Tudor Williams of Ponteglwys.

Therefore he returned with an enthusiasm more ardent than ever to his original crusade against the private ownership of the land that God made for the people, and took his constituents by the button-holes, and spoke darkly of other Acts — Acts which by and by should give the Local Authority powers of compulsory purchase.

And all this time the eye still saw nothing to purchase but bents and blown sand, blue and lemon butterflies, nodding harebells, a few tidemarks of black seaweed, a wooden jetty, a cluster of thatched kerb, the three Chapels, Edward Garden's house, and Ty Kerr.

But something was coming to Llanyglo.

On the whole they did not talk very much about it. Each had his reason for reticence, or brooding, or resentment, or calculation, as the case might be. Nevertheless, with Railhead still many miles away, they began to become accustomed to the coming and going

of strangers. They came, these strangers, to Edward Garden's house, sleeping either there or else at the double cottage down by the beach; Edward Garden himself, with a lantern in his hand, saw them hospitably over the sandhills to bed. They were surveyors and architects, accountants, geologists, prospectors, men in control of the snail that left the track of iron and grey ballast and upturned clay across the land, lawyers, conveyancers, the directors of the stone-quarries along the Porth Neigr road, and others at whose business Llanyglo could only guess. And Mr. Tudor Williams also went there, perhaps to talk about compulsory powers. These and others wandered in groups along the straggling lines of seaweed, and up the Trwyn, and far inland behind John Pritchard's farm, pointing, pacing, discussing, exactly as those minions of the Liverpool Syndicate had done that morning when work had suddenly ceased on Edward Garden's new house; but there was no talk of fence-burning now. Even Dafydd Dafis saw the hopelessness of it, and once more went about with his head bowed like a head of corn heavy with rain. Already men were widening and levelling the Porth Neigr road. One week-end in July, after an unusually large gathering at Edward Garden's house, a new waggonette from Porth Neigr came to take them back in a body. It had a pair of horses, and it took the hills in style. Dafydd Dafis, whom the vehicle overtook on his ten miles' trudge into the town, was offered a seat, but he appeared not to hear, and the vehicle drove on, enveloping him in its dust. Half-way to Porth Neigr he came upon a squad of men setting up a telegraph pole. One of them spoke to him, in English. "Dim Saesneg," he muttered, and then perhaps wondered why

he had done so. It might be "Dim Cymraeg" presently. A little farther on the waggonette passed him again, once more hiding him in its dust. No doubt it had turned aside up the rough road that led to the stone-quarries. Dafydd continued his trudge.

But in the household of Howell Gruffydd the grocer, a suppressed excitement reigned. This, when Dafydd Dafis happened to be there, showed only as resignation and a bowing to the inevitable; but at other times it seemed to confer a more frequent glitter to Howell's teeth, a new impulse to his jocularities, and a sparkle and sharpness to his wife's eyes. Cases and canisters the like of which he had never handled before were delivered at his door by the Porth Neigr carrier; these were for the consumption of Edward Garden and his guests; and he waited in person upon Mrs. Garden every Monday morning. He thought of having a Christmas almanack with his own name printed upon it. Blodwen, his wife, made him, in anticipation, a pair of linen half-sleeves that drew up over his forearms. Eesaac Oliver was forbidden any longer to fetch the eggs from the light-keeper's wife up the Trwyn; one of Hugh Morgan's boys might do this. As a preparation for Aberystwith, Eesaac Oliver was packed off to a second cousin of Blodwen's at Porth Neigr, there to attend an excellent endowed school. With the railway passing so near it would be a simple matter for him to spend his week-ends at Llanyglo.

And big consumptive John Pritchard rarely said a word about that onward-creeping snail that left its double thread of permanent track behind it, but he thought exaltedly and powerfully. Stories had already reached him of drunkenness at Railhead, and fights, and singing at nights, and other godless orgies, and

his brow was sternly set. When he preached at the Baptist Chapel about such as loved darkness and the evil paths in which they walked, it was known that he was thinking of Railhead. Men were now plotting their levels almost within sight of Llanyglo. They turned their surveying instruments on the hamlet as if they had been guns, and laid out their chains as if they had been enslaving the soil itself. Then an advance gang approached, and, even while John knew that the end was near (but not so near as all that), that end came. Eight men marched one evening into Llanyglo, bawling a bawdy chorus, with Sam Kerr showing the way. They had bottles and piggins and stone jars of beer, and, slung with joined-up leather belts between two of them, swung a barrel. They stumbled through the loose sand towards the Hafod Unos, hiccupping and polluting the peaceful evening. Ned Kerr had evidently been advised of their coming; he stood at the door of the Hafod to receive them; and the carousing began. . . . It lasted half the night, and then each clay-stained navvy and tattooed platelayer slept and snored where he fell. John Pritchard did not sleep. Faintly he could hear their singing where he lay. The red and white of the Trwyn light dyed the darkness overhead. John remembered his own words: "It is a den of li-ons —"

Something had already come to Llanyglo.

II

THE CLERK OF THE WORKS

JOHN WILLIE GARDEN was by this time at the age when he occasionally washed himself without being told. This he probably did, not out of any great love of cleanliness, but because by washing unbidden he acquired the right to retort, when the order to wash came, "I have — there!" Did one of the maids give the order he might add the word "Sucks!" This word he withheld when the command came from his mother.

He was still at school at Pannal, but ardently longed to leave. It was intended that sooner or later he should go into business with his father, and during the past Christmas vacation, which the Gardens had spent at home in Manchester, he had had the run of the offices and spinning-sheds. His real education, as distinct from his scholastic one, had been immensely advanced thereby. This real advance had taken place principally after working hours. In such cases there is usually a young clerk or market-man ready to take the son of the firm into his charge, and a certain Jack Webster had had the bringing of John Willie out. This he had done at football matches, in the dressing-rooms where the titans clad themselves for the fray, and at their sing-songs and smokers afterwards. Therefore, John Willie esteemed himself a boy of the world, and already the day seemed far distant when he had shot the

Llanyglo rabbits with his bow and arrow, and had buried a sixpence beneath the date-stone of his father's house.

To Llanyglo John Willie went again that summer, as the snail crept forward yard by yard to Abercelyn and the manganese.

All things considered, you might have been pardoned had you supposed that, without John Willie, the work at Railhead must have come to a stop. Had you wished to know anything about that railway — its cost per mile, its contractors' time-limits and penalties, its wages bills, its estimated upkeep — you would have gone, not to those men who spent week-ends at Edward Garden's house, but to John Willie. Railhead was now to him what the building of the Llanyglo house had formerly been, and the fence-burning, and rugby football, and many another interest of the days when he had been a kid and immature. It was in the summer of 1884 that the snail's antennæ approached within sight of Llanyglo, and, rain or shine, permitted or forbidden, John Willie spent most of his waking hours among the masons and smiths and navvies and plate-layers who formed the population of that nomad town of wood and earth and sleepers and rolling stock and escaping steam and corrugated iron. He knew half the men by name. He joined them at dinner when the great buzzer told half a county that it was half-past twelve. He knitted his brows over the curling and thumb-marked plans in the foremen's cabins. He passed this section of work or that, and gave the other his imprimatur. He adapted his stride to the distance between sleeper and sleeper. He spat reflectively on heaps of clay and mortar. With his hands, not in his pockets, but thrust (in imitation of the labourers

with the "drop-front" corduroys) deep into his waistband, and his cap on the back of his yellow, thistle-down head, he gave off-hand nods of greeting and warning "Steadys." He was variously known as "t' gaffer," "t' ganger," "t' clerk o' t' works," and "t' foreman."

And his friend, Percy Briggs, of Pannal School and Roundhay (where his father was an architect) accompanied him. Percy's father was one of Edward Garden's week-enders. He was making the plans of a second house, not far from where Terry Armfield's Thelemites were to have descended the shallow, marble steps to the golden shore. There was also some talk of an hotel.

For by this time quite a number of people knew at least the name of Llanyglo, and there is very little doubt that, had the place but had houses, it might even then have been that within another three or four years it actually had become — a quiet but not inaccessible resort, with perhaps a dozen striped bathing-tents and a row or two of deck-chairs drawn up on its beach, a couple of comfortable hydros established and a large new hotel a-building, a few donkeys (but no niggers nor pierrots), a place for children and for such of their elders as sought a quiet not to be found at Blackpool nor the Isle of Man, a spot unvisited by trippers, "select," a little on the expensive side, where an acquaintance struck up between families might without too much risk be improved afterwards, where the nurses would be uniformed and the luggage would be sent on in advance, where a wealthy patron might even build a house of his own (if he could get the land), a "nice" place, a place you could afterwards tell *anybody* you had been to, a place from which you would go

back feeling well and not in need of another holiday, a place — in short, a place like So-and-So, or So-and-So, out of which we try to shut history and change by being a little jealously secret about them. Llanyglo might have been, and for a short time actually was, such a place; and Percy Briggs's father, with others to tell him what to do and what not to do, was even now in the act of planning how to make it so.

In the meantime, Edward Garden's own house was a very different place from those two cottages that Dafydd Dafis had taken his own good time about match-boarding. That first lodging had been no more than a temporary camping-place for the summer. Any sagging old wicker-chairs or tables or chests of drawers from lumber-rooms had been good enough for it, and its crockery and kitchen appointments had been of the cheapest kind that Porth Neigr could supply. But not so with the new house. Everything about it spoke of permanence. The large plate-box was carried backwards and forwards at the beginning and end of the summer season, but not the Worcester dinner-service, nor the glass that filled its cupboards, nor the linen in its closets, nor the blankets nor the eiderdowns set by for winter, nor the few — the rather few — books. Mrs. Garden herself had told Howell Gruffydd that it was not likely that the place would be locked up for the winter months again. Edward Garden intended to spend more and more time there; indeed he must, unless by and by he would look musingly and a little ill-favouringly through his glasses at that sparse line of bathing-tents and that little knot of combination-saddled donkeys and say, "This does not appear to be much of a watering-place." Already he had made special arrangement for the delivery of his Manchester letters;

upstairs on the first floor he had his office, with a deep window, the side bays of which looked, the one towards the sea, the other to the mighty deltoid-shaped outline of Mynedd Mawr; and where Edward Garden settled he liked to settle comfortably. In that quiet and rugged and curtained room he was once more following the line of least resistance. The chances were that he already foresaw the direction that line was likely to take.

For Lancashire, which had been remote when folk had had to jog the ten miles from Porth Neigr behind a somnolent old brown horse, would be near when that snail had packed his lodging up and departed, leaving only its iron pathway behind it; and the Kerrs in their Hafod Unos would have been astonished to learn how much Edward Garden mused upon Lancashire and upon just such people as themselves. He mused upon the cost of living of such as they; and he mused upon their standard of living, which is a related thing, but not the same thing. He mused again as he saw the gradual change in that standard, and contrasted the things he saw with the things he remembered in his own early days. In those days, expressly taken holidays had been unheard-of things. Folk's excursions had reached little farther afield than their own legs could carry them. If John Pritchard, of Llanyglo, had never been to Porth Neigr, many and many a Manchester man of the days of Edward Garden's boyhood had never been to Liverpool. Many thousands had never seen the sea. It had been holiday enough in those days to meet in the streets, to play knurr and spell in the nearest field, to lean over walls and watch their pigs, and to tend their gardens. Slate Clubs and Goose Clubs and Holiday Clubs had not been invented. A

shilling or half a crown a week painfully saved would not have been squandered again for the sake of that little superfluity that had now become the minimum itself. The mass of the people of his day would no more have dreamed of saving money in order that sea-side lodging-house keepers should profit than they would have dreamed of taking the Grand Tour.

But a generation seemed to have arisen, very different in some ways, yet exactly the same in others. They were different in that they refused to be exploited any longer according to the old familiar formulas, yet the same in that they were as subject as their fathers had been, and as their sons and grandsons will be, to the man who could devise a new one. All manner of circumstances contributed to their unuttered invitation (it was that in effect, and the only thing they did not utter) that somebody should bring to their exploitation the spice of variety. There were smoulderings everywhere — smoulderings at Durham and West Ham, at Ayr and Lanark and Swansea, at Sheffield and Manchester and Liverpool and Leeds and Hull. Over his glasses and under his glasses Edward Garden noted them, and inferred that the sum of it all was that folk intended to have a better time than they had been having. They were quite unmistakably resolved to have a much better time. Their grandfathers' idea of a Wakes Week, for example, might have been staying at home and timing the pigeons into the cote; but they meant to improve on that. They intended to doff their clogs and to put on their thinnest shoes, to draw extravagant sums from the Club, to take railway-tickets, and not to rest from their arduous relaxation as long as a penny remained unspent. . . . Manganese? The moment they showed signs of coming his way, Edward

Garden was after richer returns than manganese would yield. He granted that without manganese there would have been no Railhead coming up out of the east, but what he had his eye on was the new generation's deadly resolve to be amused, the crammed coffers of its Holiday Clubs, the beginnings of those tens and scores and hundreds of thousands of pounds that to-day a single town will get rid of in a single fortnight by the sea.

But *only* if it came his way. He was no Terry. It was his business to take things as they were, not to try to make them something they were not. He had no theories, no criticisms, no impulses, no hesitations. He asked for nothing but uncoloured data. Therefore, and to that extent, Llanyglo's future was not entirely in his hands. It was still free, and always, always, save for a little rising of new stone here and there, just the same to look at — watched over by the Light on its noble Trwyn, guarded by the majestic mountain behind, and presenting to its diurnal tides the same shore that Copley Fielding drew.

Now it befell towards the end of the July of that year that the Welshmen of Llanyglo held an open-air service for the young in one of the hollows of the sandhills. It was a blazing Sunday afternoon, with the sea like silk and the pale mountains seeming thrice their distance away. They had brought a small moveable platform and reading-desk from the Baptist Chapel, and first John Pritchard, and then Howell Gruffydd had mounted it. The sun beat on the bare heads and best bonnets and black-coated shoulders of parents; myriads of tiny hopping insects gave the surface of the sand the appearance of being in motion; and a buzzard sailed in great steady circles in the sky of larkspur blue, now

standing out to sea, now a speck in the direction of Delyn or Mynedd Mawr.

Howell was teaching the twelve or fourteen urchins a new hymn-tune, singing it now alone, now with them, now listening with little gestures of encouragement and nods of pleasure as their voices rose. His secular jocularly was not absent, but tempered to the occasion.

“Louder, louder and quicker — it give you an appetite for your tea,” he said, waving his arms and beating with his foot to the accelerated time. “You will not wake Mrs. Hughes at the lighthouse — now — ‘*Joyful, Joyful* ——’”

And, with Eesaac Oliver leading, they went through the tune again.

That a special exhortation should be given to those of tenderer years had been deliberately resolved upon. Since that evening when the eight men from the line had rolled drunkenly over the sandhills to the Kerrs’ house, a fear had weighed on the chapel-goers of Llanyglo. Until then, their children had known nothing of the wide and wicked world; but that ignorance could not now be maintained. They must be put on their guard, and for that job the ingratiating Howell was the man.

The tune came to an end, and he put his leaflet of printed words into his pocket and shepherded the row of urchins into position with movements of his hands.

“Move that way, John Roberts — I cannot see Olwen Morgan’s face. Hugh Morgan, stop poking your foot into that rabbit-hole or you fall down it and we have to dig you out. Miss Pritchard, give Gwen Roberts her sunbonnet, if you please, or she catss a sunstroke. Ithel, where is your handkerchief? Your nose resem-bles a snail. . . . Now listen to me. If I

see a boy or girl not pay atten-sson I stop till he do pay atten-sson ——”

And he began. He told them that soon, with the coming of the railway, there would come also all manner of pip-ple, some good pip-ple, some bad pip-ple. He told them that at Railhead were many bad pip-ple, who swore, and drank a great deal more than was good for them. He told them (discreetly, since he had no wish to preach a *jehad* against customers so good as the Gardens) that while some boys might go to Railhead to play, boys like some he would not mention, who had lived in large towns, yet it would be bet-ter if they kept themselves to themselves. . . . He did not go the length of asserting that all good boys were Welsh and country boys, and that all bad ones were town-bred and English, but — but — well, things have to be put a little starkly to the young. They shuffled their feet in the hot loose sand as he talked. The buzzard sailed back from the mountains. The sandhoppers danced as if the ground had been a frying-pan. A holy peace brooded over the land. Away at Railhead men, those sinful men who drank and swore slept in rows, stretched face-downwards on the grass or the thrown-up banks of clay.

Then the grocer began to promise the rewards of virtue. He turned with an interrogative smile to John Pritchard.

“And now, Mr. Pritchard, do you think I might tell them that sec-ret? Indeed I think I get into trouble if I do! But yess, I will tell them.—Atten-sson now. Hugh Morgan, do not scratss your head. Now! — Can any boy or girl tell me what there iss to be in Mr. Pritchard’s field next month?”

They guessed at once, with one voice. Howell

Gruffydd knew better than to ask an audience questions it could not answer. He held up his hands in admiring surprise.

“Indeed they guess — they are every one right, Miss Pritchard! Astonishing! Dear me, I never saw such s’arp young men and women! — Yess, they are right. There is to be a Treat for the Sunday School scholars! There now! And there will be races, and prizes, and tea, and the books will be given for those who have had the largest num-ber of attendances and have not been late.— And now: who is giving this Treat?”

“Mr. Tudor Williams!” they cried.

“Right again — it is Mr. Tudor Williams, the Member of Parliament! And Mr. Williams is giv-ing something else too. He is giv-ing — I have seen them — new pictures — pictures of the construc-tion of flowers — (bot-tany I think it is called, Miss Pritchard?) — and an-i-mals — and fiss-sses ——”

He turned up his eyes, as if to the heavens from which these rewards of virtuous living descended. The croupy shrilling of a cock came from down by the beach. The bees droned, and the wheeling buzzard suddenly dropped like a plummet a hundred yards through the larkspur blue.

It was then, in that very moment, that Howell Gruffydd’s face was seen to change. He stopped, listening. Beyond the hot cuplike hollow in which they were assembled was another sunken way, and along this way somebody was approaching. Probably in complete unconsciousness that any hearer was at hand, this somebody was singing softly as he came. It was Tommy, the youngest of the Kerrs, and he was singing to himself, in very bad Welsh, *Glan Meddwdod Mwyn*.

Now this song is one of the less reputable songs of Wales. The English drinking song usually contents itself with extolling the mere convivial act, drawing a decent veil over the lamentable effects of that act; but even in its title *Glan Meddwdod Mwyn* (which words mean *Fair, Kind Drunkenness*) has no such reticence. It depicts . . . but you can see the difference for yourself. No wonder it froze the words on Howell Gruffydd's lips. In the singer's complete unconsciousness that he was not alone lay the whole sting. The malice, the intent, the hateful Lancashire humour of the Kerrs they had had before, but not *this* home-thrust with a weapon they themselves had provided!

Tommy might just as well have climbed the hummock and told them that, since their language provided equally for these eventualities, they were no better than anyone else. . . .

An English drunkard, to grub in the lees of their own language like this! —

And little Hugh Morgan had sniggered! —

The unseen Tommy and his (their) song passed on towards the Hafod Unos.

Then Howell bestirred himself again. "There, now!" he said; "what had he just been telling them? Indeed, that was oppor-tune, whatever!" . . . But, though he strove to hide it, there was a hollowness now in his exhortation. He felt as if he had been building a wall against a contagion that crept in upon the invisible air. If Thomas Kerr knew *Glan Meddwdod Mwyn* he might also know viler ditties still; if little Hugh Morgan, whom he had thought pure, had sniggered at *Glan Meddwdod* he might guffaw outright at the baser version of *Sospan Bach*. . . .

It could only (Howell thought) be original sin. . . .

It was at least a little balm to him to hear the fervour with which Eesaac Oliver once more led the singing of *Joyful, Joyful*.

And, by the way (speaking of songs), Eesaac Oliver's choice of the narrow and difficult path had already involved him in a persecution in which song played a minor part. This persecution was at the hands of John Willie Garden. For, in an unguarded moment, Eesaac Oliver had confided to John Willie his plans for his career; and since then the unfeeling John Willie, on his way to Railhead and debauchery, had held over him the song that contains the lines: —

*“He wass go to Je-sus Colledge
For to try to get some knowledge —
Wass you ever see,” etc. etc.*

John Willie, itching to get away from Pannal, could not understand why anybody wanted to go to Jesus, Aberystwith, or any other Colledge.

*“I think it would be wiser
For to stay with Sister Liza —
Wass you ever see,” etc. etc.*

he would hum softly and (alas) contemptuously; and, since it was part of his chosen career to do so, Eesaac Oliver would very expressly forgive John Willie, getting into quite a Christian heat about it.

On the day after that homily on the Llanyglo sandhills, John Willie Garden went as usual to Railhead, and was enabled to delight his leather-belted and corduroyed friends there with a piece of information, hitherto secret, that he had from his father's table. This was that the line was to be opened in the following Spring by His Royal Highness the Duke of Snell. The announcement produced an astonishing effect.

Not one in ten of the men either knew or cared what the enterprise was all about. They knew that the railway was a railway, but beyond that, none of its dividends being destined for their pockets, it was merely the job — “the” job, the job of the moment, the job not very different from the last job, and very, very like all the other jobs to come, until their living hands should become as stiff as the picks they plied, and the light of their eyes be extinguished as their own lanterns were extinguished at daybreak. But at the news that the Duke of Snell was to do his trick when they had finished theirs, they were innocently uplifted and delighted. *This* would be something to tell their grandchildren in the years to come! They would spit on their hands and work better all the afternoon for *this!* . . . In the meantime they discussed it when the great buzzer called them to their beef and bacon sandwiches, their chops and pickles and bread and cheese.

“So it’s to be t’ Dewk o’ Snell!” one of them admired, with as much satisfaction as if he himself had had a tremendous leg-up in the world thereby; he was a West Riding navvy, whom twenty years of digging up the length and breadth of England had delocalised of everything save his powerful accent. “Well, now, I’d figgered it out ’at it’ld happen be t’ Prince o’ Wales mesen ——”

Here struck in a Cardiff man, so lean that you would not have got another pennyweight of fat off him if you had fried him in his own frying-pan.

“Wass-n’t it the Duke of Snell that mar-ried the Prin-cess Victorine?”

“Noa. That wor t’ Dewk o’ Flint,” the Yorkshire navvy replied, with authority. “T’ Dewk o’ Snell wed t’ youngest, t’ Princess Alix. I knaw all t’ lot on ’em;

t' missis hed all their pic'ters o' biscuit-boxes; they reached from one end o' t' chimley-piece to t' other; ye couldn't ha' got a finger in between."

"Well, well," said the Cardiff man, an inquiring mind among many complacent ones, "it is curious, how lit-tle diff-erence it makes to us. The Prinss of Wales, say you? If I wait for the Prinss of Wales to give me ano-ther piece of this ba-con I wait a long time, whatever! . . . But prapss we get our in-vi-tations soon," he added jocularly, taking an enormous bite of bread. "S'all you be there, John Willie?"

John Willie answered, a little doubtfully, that he hoped to be present at the ceremony if he could get away from school. The Cardiff man wagged his head. There are few Welshmen who do not wag their heads at the sound of the word school.

"Ah, school; it iss a gra-and thing," he said, still wagging. "I not be work-king here with my shirt wet-on my back if I go to a prop-per school."

"Oh, be dinged to that tale!" returned the Yorkshireman bluntly, cutting cheese on his leathery palm. "T' schools is all my backside! They learn 'em a lot o' newfangled stuff, but I remember 'at when tea wor eight shillin' a pund, an' they kept a penny nutmeg in a wood case as if it wor diamonds——"

"Aw-w-w, there iss that Burkie, talk-king again!" said the Cardiff man.

"It's reight, for all that ——"

And presently the talk had veered round to those very changes of standards and conditions, his careful study of which had led Edward Garden to the conclusion that a generation had arisen that intended thenceforward to have more of the world's good things than it had been having or know the reason why.

As it happened, the work on the line had that day taken a new leap forward. Again all the life of the python had rolled on ahead, and John Willie, lunching with his friends, was doing so at a point actually beyond Llanyglo, two miles nearer to Abercelyn. From the Abercelyn end also the line was coming to meet them, and the two sections would meet at a place called Sarn. Sarn means Causeway, and there the sea showed, like a piece of bright piano-wire, across a waste of fleecy bog-cotton and bog-myrtle, sundew and flags and rushes. A siding was to be made there. Because of Sarn Church, a tiny little building with an odd Fifteenth-Century circular tower, Squire Wynne loved this region, and attended service there; but as that Service was held only once a year, the "Hough!" of the shunting-engines and the clanking of couplings would disturb it little. The Squire sighed to think that, among so many, many other changes, it would be only one change the more. His sales of land had provided him with just enough money to last his time out, and on the whole he thought he did not want to outlive his time. Perhaps he too had had his glimpse of that vision of Edward Garden's, though as it were in obverse; and, looking, he shrugged his shoulders. Who, in another twenty or thirty years, would care for the things he had cared for? Who would waste a thought on antiquity? Who would open his County History, or his books on Brasses or Church Plate, Memorials or Heraldry or Glass? Who would know each tree he came upon on his walks, as a country doctor knows his patients — its sickness, its health, its need of air, its treatment, its amputations? Who would repair the staircase at the Plas, and restore its magnificent ceilings, and set the merry smoke streaming up its chimneys

once more? . . . Mr. Tudor Williams would probably do this last. He would no doubt convert the Plas into a Museum (as he would have converted Sarn Church itself into a Museum), and fill it with cases of ice-scratched pebbles, and diagrams of strata and flowers, for reluctant and educated urchins to gape at. The Squire was entirely in sympathy with John Willie Garden's corduroyed friend Burkie about these things. It seemed to him that the multitude, which after all had backbone enough to starve rather than go on the Parish, would not resist this organised pauperisation of its mind. It was time the Squire died, since he held that not everybody has the right to everything and no questions asked. Otherwise not an inhumane man, there were nevertheless abstractions which he loved more than he loved his fellow-being. . . .

And who would drink what was left of that wondrous old port?

Well, the Squire, sighing and smiling a little wistfully both at once, intended to see to that himself.

III

THE CURTAIN RAISER

BUT while the march of events drove the aborigines of Llanyglo ever more and more closely together, as the reaping of a field of corn drives the mice and snakes and rabbits to the narrowing square in the centre, at the same time something of the opposite process went on. Two or three stood aloof, Welsh when it suited them to be Welsh, less Welsh at other times. One of these was Mr. Tudor Williams, the Member of Parliament. Another was Howell Gruffydd, the grocer.

For thick as thieves now were Edward Garden and Tudor Williams, and to their frequent councils was admitted also Raymond Briggs, the architect, whose son had been John Willie's schoolfellow at Pannal.

This Raymond Briggs was a Yorkshireman, from Hunslet, but you wouldn't have thought it to look at him. You saw at a glance that he was superfine, but you had no idea how superfine until he opened his mouth. He was tall, plumpish, very erect, numerously chinned and faultlessly dressed; and, having entered into culture by one of the noblest of its portals, architecture, it was small wonder that he wished to forget Hunslet, with its black canal, its serried weaving-sheds, its grimy warehouses, and its sooty brickfields. Certainly he had completely forgotten it in his speech. Over an alien mode he had acquired a really remark-

able mastery; and had it not been for a trifling uncertainty about his vowels, particularly his "a's," you would have set him down as quite as much London as Leeds. And so more or less with everything else about Raymond.—But his wife haled you north again. To her, acquirements were like hot plates to the fingers, to be kept constantly in motion or else dropped altogether. Her husband was probably the most humourless man who ever came to Llanyglo; but Maud Briggs would use the homeliest of dialect-words in the most artificial of accents, and would tell you, even while she was mothering you with cool drinks in the most hospitable fashion, that the piece of ice she dropped with a clink into your glass was positively "the last piece in the hoil"—if you know your West Riding well enough to understand the peculiar significance of the word "hoil" as applied to a house. Her rings were dazzling, for Raymond's invaluable lack of humour had enabled him to make his mark on the world; the blue-and-white collapsible boat which their son Percy brought with him to Llanyglo had cost his father a cool twenty-five pounds in London; and it would not be for lack of money if Percy did not turn out a very superior silk purse indeed.

So when the snail, his journey finished, rested and made the siding at Sarn and then returned to Porth Neigr again, and Railhead was dismantled, and grasses began to seed themselves about the upturned soil, Edward Garden and Raymond Briggs and Tudor Williams, M.P., had their heads frequently together; and no longer were the short days and long nights a season of hibernation for Llanyglo. Three years out of four the Llanyglo winters are mild; this particular winter was not so inclement that it stopped building-operations for more than a day or two at a time; and, with a sort

of miniature Railhead strung out along the Porth Neigr road for his labour, Raymond's second house rose steadily course by course, and already they were draining and digging for the first hotel. If they were mainly Porth Neigr men Raymond employed, that did not mean that Dafydd Dafis or any other Llanyglo man who was so minded would not be taken on; indeed they were taken on; but it did mean that the centre of gravity of the labour-supply had shifted, and would never shift back again. Those temporary dwellings along the Porth Neigr road were a constant reminder that if the Llanyglo men did not like it they might lump it; and as they did neither, but while disliking it intensely, bore a hand and took their wages just the same, they appeared to be sufficiently quelled.

Edward Garden, while making Llanyglo his headquarters, was again much away. A whisper was started that he was once more treating for land, but, as no further land appeared to be available, the rumour was derided as idle. Howell Gruffydd was already converting the two original matchboarded cottages to his own use. Something Departmental happened somewhere beyond Llanyglo's ken (probably Mr. Tudor Williams knew all about it), and the word came that the Post Office was to be transferred from John Pritchard's to Howell's new shop; and though the Post Office was on the whole more trouble than it was worth, for a little while Howell seemed likely to have a quarrel on his hands.

But Howell had not definitely taken a part without knowing equally definitely how to bear himself in that part. *He* did not intend to be herded into the gloomy company of a lot of beaten and sulking Welsh nationalists! As if already a vast spud had cut about Man-

chester or Liverpool, and an equally vast spade had taken either of these cities up bodily like a square of peat and had set it down again on the Llanyglo sand-hills, so the idea of expansion had taken hold of Howell's mind. He even went a little preposterously beyond bounds, as others did later, when they learned that their old Welsh dressers and armchairs were a rarity and marketable, and proceeded to put ridiculous prices upon them. And probably Edward Garden had a use for Howell. Already it looked like it. The answer with which Howell appeased John Pritchard in the matter of the transference of the Post Office looked very much like it. Edward Garden himself could not so have reconciled John to all this innovation with a single whispered word.

For "*Bazaars*," Howell said furtively to John, behind his hand; and the quick electric gleam in his eyes was instantly extinguished again. . . .

You see. They had never had a bazaar at Llanyglo. There would have been little profit in passing their own money about among themselves. But *strangers'* money. . . . That was the soul of good in things otherwise evil that Howell whispered to John Pritchard, and later it was so observingly distilled out for the benefit of the Baptist and other Chapels that for a time there was actually a danger lest the mulcting should keep folk away.

And if even Mr. Tudor Williams himself now appeared a little absent-minded among his constituents, and hauled himself, as it were, out of remote fastnesses of thought to grasp them fervently (if indiscriminately) by the hand, and to inquire after their rheumatics and wives and other plagues, well, he was a busy, and not at all a wealthy man. At Llanyglo, as elsewhere, it was

not only Welsh and English; it was also Get or Go Wanting. The early bird. . . .

So (to push on) circular smears of white appeared on the windows of the second of Raymond Briggs's houses (it was finished by Christmas), and these gave it the appearance of a sudden new Argus, looking out on every side for other houses to join it; and the scaffold-poles began to rise about the new hotel like a larch-plantation. Raymond came and went, and Mr. Tudor Williams came and went, and short winter day followed short winter day. Then, with cat's-ice still glazing the ruts and pools but a feeling of Spring in the air, Porth Neigr, ten miles away, came bustlingly to life. An emissary of the Lord-Lieutenant of the County took up his quarters at the Royal Hotel, and there he was one day joined by the Lord-Lieutenant himself, with Sir Somebody Something, of the Office of Works. These summoned others, who in turn summoned others, and maps and plans were sent for and a line of route was chosen. Police were drafted in, and folk went up into their upper front rooms to see which bedstead or table-leg would best stand the strain of a rope across the street. The old station had been repainted to suit with the new extension, and masts rose at its entrance. To the residents in the principal streets the Council lent loyal emblems and devices. The sounds of bands practising could be heard. His Royal Highness the Duke of Snell was coming to open the line.

Then on the appointed day, the town broke into a flutter of bunting. The March sun shone merrily on Royal Standard and Red Dragon, on Union Jack and ensign, on gold-fringed banners with "CROESAW" on one side and "WELCOME" on the other. On the new metals a Royal Salute of fog-signals was laid.

Warning of the Approach passed along the line, on the red-druggeted platform officials great and small waited, and John Willie Garden's friends, whose picks and shovels had made the clay fly, would no doubt read all about it a few days later in the papers.

So, with detonation of fog-signals, and some cheers, but more wide-eyed gazing, and bared heads and bowing backs, and an Address, and other circumstances of loyalty and fraternisation and joy, His Royal Highness and John Willie Garden between them declared the line open; but only the Duke rode on the footplate of the garlanded engine with the crossed flags on its belly. Probably intensely bored, he rode out about a mile towards Abercelyn, and then returned to luncheon at the Royal Hotel. An hour later, coming out again, he passed away to Lancashire. All was over. Folk might now take down their bunting as soon as they pleased. The trick was virtually done for Llanyglo. A loop at Sarn or a new junction, and a realisation on the part of those in authority that there were things that paid better than Abercelyn manganese, and Llanyglo would be "linked up" with rigid iron to the rest of the world.

Nay, it is already linked up even more straitly. A few poles and a thread of wire, crossing the sandhills and ending at the Llanyglo Stores, have some weeks ago put an end to its isolation. It is the nerve that accompanies the sinew, and Howell Gruffydd now receives and despatches telegrams. All is over bar the shouting, and it will not be long before that begins. They are busy now, painting and papering the new hotel, and decorating and upholstering it. It reeks of new paint and varnish and furniture-polish and the plumbers' blowpipes. It resounds with all the doubly loud noises

of a half-empty place — with hammering and tacking, clanking buckets, the “Whoas!” to the horses of the delivery-vans, the jolting of heavy things moved upstairs, the rasp of scrubbing-brushes, the squeak of window-cloths. It is spick-and-span, from the feathery new larches in front to the silvery new dustbins behind. . . . Wherefore, seeing that we shall only be in the way, with never a chair to sit down on yet, and nothing to eat in the place save what the charwoman and the green-aproned carters and carriers have brought for themselves, we may as well leave all these things to the folk whose business it is to attend to them, and take a nap for a month or two, secure that when we wake up again the scene will be set for Llanyglo’s *lever de rideau*, that starched and polite and not quite real little piece that preludes the main action of our tale. There is heather and wild thyme up the Trwyn, very comfortable to doze on; suppose we have our nap up there? . . .

Ah-h-h-h! — That was the July sun that woke us. It’s a warm and brilliant morning. Stretch yourself first, and then have a look down. . . .

That’s a surprise, isn’t it? You didn’t quite expect that? Really not much changed, and yet it’s entirely changed. Two new houses and an hotel (in this clean air they’ll be new-looking for years yet), and that little border of deck-chairs and bathing-tents and slowly moving parasols, not a couple of hundred yards long altogether, and yet the whole appearance of the place is altered. After a moment you find it quite difficult to remember it as it was the last time we were up here. See that little puff of smoke over there? That’s a shunting-engine at Sarn; you’ll hear the sound in a moment; there! — Butterflies about us, like hovering

pansies; you can see just one corner of poor old Terry's Thelema showing; and out there, where the sea changes colour, just where the gulls are rocking, that's a bank of sand a storm threw up three or four years ago. And that's the telegraph-wire I spoke of, running straight across to Howell Gruffydd's shop there. Yes, that links Llanyglo up. . . .

Where did all these people come from? Well, it's hard to say, but no doubt Edward Garden's got them here for one reason and another. He may even have "packed" the place a little carefully; I don't know. At any rate, he's lent "*Sea View*" there (that's the newer of the two houses) to Gilbert Smythe. Who's Gilbert Smythe? Well, he's the Medical Officer for Brannewsome, Lancs., and a very clever and quite an honest man. But Gilbert's family's grown more quickly than his fortune, live as frugally as he will he's always in debt, and he isn't going to say "No" to the free offer of a well-built, roomy house, not three minutes from the sands where the children can play all day, and furnished from the potato-masher in the kitchen to the little square looking-glasses in the servants' attics. And of course Edward Garden asks nothing in return. But *if* Gilbert cares to say that the Llanyglo water is abundant and pure, Edward won't object—it is excellent water. And *if* Gilbert likes to praise its air and low rainfall (low for Wales), well, he'll be telling no more than the truth. And *if* Gilbert (not bearing ancient Mrs. Pritchard too much in mind) finds the longevity at Llanyglo remarkable, what's the harm in that? As a matter of fact, there is a saying that the oldest inhabitant always dies first at Llanyglo, and the others follow in order of age, which would be a poor look-out for anybody setting up in the Insurance business here. . . . So

if by and by Gilbert signs a statement to this general effect, you can hardly blame him. He has his way to make, and he is a wise man who allows the galleons of the Gardens of the world to give his skiff a tow.

The others? Well, Edward Garden's a cleverer man than I, and you can hardly expect me to explain the workings of his mind to you in detail. But I think we may assume he knows what he is about. I needn't say they're all very well-to-do; you can see that even from here; but there's something else about them, something we saw in Raymond Briggs, that's a little difficult to describe — perhaps it's merely that they too intend (*mutatis mutandis*, of course) that their children shall have a better time than their parents have had — or perhaps we'd better say their grandparents had, for their parents do themselves very well, indeed. I don't think you can say more about them than that — it's just that dash of Raymond Briggs. . . . Squire Wynne wouldn't understand them in the least. The Squire's wasted too much time over antiquity. He doesn't know anything about these people who are coming on. Except in their clothes, and so on, he'd see very little difference between them and people Raymond Briggs would look at as if they weren't there. He wouldn't understand Philip Lacey, for example. (Do you see that orange-and-black striped blazer — there by the seaweed: he's pointing; that's Philip Lacey.) Philip is the big Liverpool florist, seedsman, and landscape-gardener; if he hasn't his "roots in the land" in exactly the sense the Squire understands, his plants have; and Philip distinctly does not intend that *Euonyma* and *Wygelia*, who are at present at school at Brighton, shall go into one of his fourteen or fifteen retail shops. Philip isn't spending all that money for that. . . . (Understand me, I think

Philip's perfectly right; the only thing I don't quite see is why he should veneer good sound stuff with something that's an obvious sham.) Of his wife, frankly, I don't think very much. Her processes show too plainly. Philip has his business to attend to, but Mrs. Lacey never leaves her one idea, day or night. . . . There, Philip's stopped and spoken to Mr. Morrell. Mr. Morrell has just as many hopes and plans for Hilda as the Laceys have for Euonyma and Wygelia, but he knows that his "a's" are past praying for, so he makes rather a display of his native speech. I needn't tell you what a trial that is to Hilda. . . .

And bear in mind that these are prosperous people, well-travelled people (though they mostly keep to the beaten tracks where they meet one another — it's Mrs. Briggs's chief recollection of Florence that she met some people she knew in Leeds there), people who put up at far better hotels than you or I do. And if these, who can afford it, can be shown the way to Llanglo, the chances are that a crowd of other people, who certainly can't afford it but as certainly won't be out of it, will come in their wake.

What do you say to our going down and having a closer look at them? We might take a stroll as far as Howell Gruffydd's shop — I beg its pardon, Stores. Sit still a moment though; here's Minetta Garden behind us. She's been sketching the Dinas, very likely. Minetta very much wants to be an artist, and you meet her with her sketching things all over the place. It may or may not be a passing fancy; she certainly has what Raymond Briggs calls a "Rossetti head" — enormous dark eyes, sharpish jaw, straight dark hair, and a disconcerting way of staring at people who are "putting it on" a little more thickly than usual (she stares pretty

frequently at Raymond himself). Ah, she's taking the steep way down. We'll take the other way. . . .

Now we're on the level; better put your tie straight — or aren't you overpowered by these things? I confess I am; Raymond Briggs always chills me when he casts his eye over my front elevation. No thick-booted undergraduates' holiday-parties nor furry art-students with knickers and bare throats here. We're spruce at Llanyglo. Even on a week-day it's like a Church Parade, and on Sundays we go one better still. All the men have brightly coloured flannel blazers and gaudy cammerbands, and the women carry many-flooned parasols by a ring at the ferrule end, and wear toilettes straight out of the "Queen." Some of them will change for lunch; all of them will for *table d'hôte* at seven. They protest that they vastly prefer dinner at seven, but what with the servants' dinners at midday, and husbands who prefer the old-fashioned hour, and one thing and another, they take their principal meal at one. There's no reason they shouldn't. There's no reason they should mention it at all. But they do, every day. If you're introduced to them, they'll all have told you within twenty-four hours. It's as if they didn't want there to be any mistake about something or other. . . .

Here's where the donkeys turn. They have red and white housings, and their names across their foreheads — "*Tiny*," "*Prince*," and so on; the donkey-rides are a little offshoot of *Porth Neigr Omnibuses*. Kite-flying's popular here too — that's Mr. Morrell's, the big star-shaped one. The bathing-tents and deck-chairs are mostly hired from Howell Gruffydd, but there are no boats yet except Percy Briggs's twenty-five-pound col-

lapsible one; those who want to go fishing have to use one of those old Copley Fielding things by the jetty there. . . . Now we're coming to the people. Here's Raymond Briggs with Mr. Lacey, Raymond in his orange-and-black blazer and a white Homburg hat, Philip in a blue blazer with white braid and a plain straw hat; both with perfect creamy rippling white trousers and spotless white doeskin boots. They're talking off-handedly about other holiday-places — Norway, the Highlands, the Riviera — and they're afraid of showing any enthusiasm or delight. Of every place they know they say that it has "gone off" since they first went there. There's a subtle undercurrent of contest about their conversation. Philip was at Hyères as recently as last winter, looking at the violets; but Raymond has been three times to Arles and Nîmes. I suppose honours are easy.

"Roman, I've heard?" Philip remarks. (You can hear him as you pass.)

"Yes, Roman, with a Saracenic tower."

"Ah, that tower's Saracenic, is it?"

"Saracenic."

"Wonderful people!"

"Indeed yes!"

"Curious how it takes you back into ancient times."

"Yes, yes, it shortens history."

"But the hotel accommodation! ——"

"Oh, bad in the extreme!"

"What they want is entirely new and up-to-date management ——"

"Quite so ——"

"Can't say I thought much of their *bouillabaisse*."

"An acquired taste, I suppose ——"

And they pass on. They'll talk like that the whole

morning. They're not really interested in their subject. As I say, it makes you think of a sort of contest. Personally, I always want to applaud when somebody scores a good point. Perhaps the idea is that they're doing Llanyglo a favour by coming here —

There, stepping over the tent-ropes, are Mrs. Briggs and Mr. Ashton. Mr. Ashton is Edward Garden's chief London representative, a man of pleasure and of the world, and for all I know his function may be to keep these prosperous northerners up to the metropolitan mark. Mrs. Briggs, for example, who is very short and stout, and wears a lavender bonnet and pelisse, and certainly will not walk far on the sand in those heels, is on her mettle now. She is telling Mr. Ashton some London hotel experience or other. I like Mrs. Briggs. She's worth ten of Raymond. But I don't think she quite knows which is the paste and which the jewels in her speech.

“—— and so at the ‘Metropole’ they couldn't take Ray and I in; not that I was surprised in the very least, such frights as we looked after the voyage, and hardly any luggage; it hadn't come on from Paris, you see. So I says to Ray, ‘It's no good making a noration here, for it's plain they don't want us. I'm glad they're doing so well they can afford to turn money away.’ So I turns to the manager, who was staring at my slippers I'd put on for the railway-journey, and ‘Don't if it hurts you,’ I said, and with that we slammed our things together and drove off to the ‘Grand’——”

You can hear Mr. Ashton's sympathetic murmurs . . . but that's Mrs. Lacey, with Mr. Morrell, just turning; she thinks that *Euonyma* and *Wygelia* have been quite long enough in the water. Mr. Morrell is in cool-looking cream alpaca; Mrs. Lacey, who is hook-nosed

and pepper-and-salt haired and thin as a hop-pole, resembles a many-flooned hollyhock in her silvery battleship grey.

"They'll tak' no harm, weather like this," Mr. Morrell is saying. "What's that I was going to ask you, now? . . . I have it. Is it right 'at Briggs is to build you a new house ovver yonder?"

A foot or so over Mr. Morrell's head, Mrs. Lacey replies that Mr. Lacey hasn't decided yet.—"You see, with the girls at Brighton for another year yet, and then of course they'll have to go to Paris, it's early to say."

"There's some talk of his making a Floral Valley, isn't there?"

"I've not heard.— But I'm sure those girls ——"

"They're as right as rain wi' Mrs. Maynard ——"

But that is precisely where Mrs. Lacey thinks Mr. Morrell is mistaken. She has nothing whatever against Mrs. Maynard, who is a young widow, but she would like to know a little more about the late Mr. Maynard before admitting her to unreserved intimacy. Mrs. Maynard has not quite the figure a "Mrs." ought to have, and does more bathing than swimming (if you understand me). That's an accomplishment she learned at Ostend (for if Mr. Ashton, the London agent, is metropolitan, Mrs. Maynard brings quite a cosmopolitan air to Llanyglo). The misses Euonyma and Wygelia, on the other hand, learned to swim at Brighton, walking to the bathing-place in a crocodile. You see the difference. Brighton is not Ostend, any more than Llanyglo is either, and Mrs. Lacey considers that you can't be too careful. . . . That's Mrs. Maynard, with her back to the oncoming breaker. Her bathing-dress is quite complete, as complete as Mrs. Garden's,

drying outside her tent there; but Mrs. Lacey disappears of those twinkling scarlet ribbons. She considers them to be little points of attraction, that do all that is asked of them, and more. She prophesied that the red would "run" in the water, but it didn't, and that makes matters rather worse, for if Mrs. Maynard knows as well as that which red will run and which won't she is practised —

And those two graceful but rather skinned-rabbit-looking young shapes in the gleaming navy-blue costumes with the white braid are the girls.

Now we're among the castles. Quite a horde of children, and very pretty children too, with their spades and buckets and their petticoats bunched up inside striped knickers (those too you get at Gruffydd's). That's Gilbert Smythe, the Medical Officer, the tall shaggy man carrying the bucket of water for the little boy's moat. He'll be giving Llanyglo its bathing testimonial too. Don't tread on that seaweed; it may be a castle garden, or a sea-serpent, or anything else in the child's imagination. . . . There are the boys trying to launch the collapsible boat. John Willie hasn't grown much; he won't be a tall man; but he's filling out. That minx Mrs. Maynard makes quite a lot of him, and says she likes the feel of his fine-spun hair. Whether John Willie likes her to feel it or not he does not betray.

Now for Howell Gruffydd's. . . .

There you are. "THE LLANYGLO STORES," in big gold letters right across the front of the two cottages. What do you think of it?

Yes in one way and another, there must be a largish sum sunk in "stock." Whether Howell's buying on credit or not I don't know, but he looks prosper-

ous; he's had his beard trimmed, and he wears a new hat. Green butterfly-nets and brown and white and grey sandshoes — spades and buckets and balls and fishing-lines and toy ships — bottles of scent and the "Llanyglo Sunburn Cure" (made up for him by the chemist at Porth Neigr) — a new board with "Tri-cycles for Hire" on it (that's the shed at the back, and Eesaac Oliver, home for the holidays, books the hirings and does the repairs) — baskets and spirit-kettles and ironmongery, all in addition to the groceries.— Yes, Howell has quite a big business now. Let's go inside and buy something.

"Good morning, Mr. Gruffydd; papers in yet? No? I thought I saw Hugh coming down the Sarn road half an hour ago. Yes, a lovely day. How's Eesaac Oliver? Still at Porth Neigr? . . . No, no, I know he's home for his holidays; I saw him driving Mr. Pritchard's hay-cart yesterday; I mean when is he going to Aberystwith? . . . Next year? Good! He'll make his mark in the world! — Mr. Garden been in this morning yet? . . . He's driving in the mountains? Well, there's always a breeze in the mountains. . . . No, serve Mrs. Roberts first. How are you, Mrs. Roberts?"

Howell still sells Mrs. Roberts her pennyworth of bicarbonate of soda, and with the same smile as ever, but he could do without her custom now. Look round. Crates of eggs (the Trwyn hens can't keep pace with the demand now), great Elizabethan gables of tinned fruits and salmon, a newspaper counter, the Post Office behind the wire grating there, strings of things hanging from the ceiling, scarcely an inch of Edward Garden's matchboarding to be seen, and three assistants, all busily weighing, packing, checking, snipping the string off on

the little knives on the wooden string-boxes, and passing the parcels to the boys with the hand-carts. But we ought to have been here a couple of hours ago. Mrs. Briggs and Mrs. Lacey and Mrs. Garden were giving their orders for the day then. They come every morning, rings on their fingers and bells on their toes, high heels and flounced parasols and all the lot, and Howell doesn't have it all his own way then, I can tell you. For this is where our ladies are really efficient. They may never dream of travelling otherwise than first-class, but they know the price of everything to a halfpenny and a farthing. There's no "If 'twill do 'twill do" about them when it comes to the management of a house. And when Hilda Morrell grows out of the stage of wishing her father would talk "like other people," the chances are that she'll discover too that this is her real strength, as it was her mother's. Mrs. Maynard comes in with them of a morning sometimes, and tells them how *tre-men-dously* clever she thinks them, to know the differences between things like that, and vows that *her* tradesmen rob her right and left because she hasn't been properly brought up; and then Mrs. Briggs, putting down the egg she is holding to the light, cries, "Eh, it's nothing, love — I could learn you in a month!"

But Mrs. Lacey detects a secret sarcasm in the phrase about the bringing-up.

And the men will be in for their newspapers presently.

Now a stroll to the hotel, and just a peep at them by and by as they have lunch. . . .

This is the hotel lounge. The varnish is quite dry, though it doesn't look it. A dozen little round tables, chairs heavily upholstered in crimson velvet, festoons of heavy gilt cord on the curtains, and that's the service-

hatch in the corner. The waiters are rather melancholy; you see, it isn't a public-house; everything goes down on the residents' bills; and that means fewer tips. Tea is served here in the afternoon, but of course the ladies never dream of tipping. Those excellent purchasers work out everything at cost price, omit such items as interest on capital, insurance, depreciation, and so on, and find a shilling for two pennyworth of bread and butter, a twopenny cake, and a pinch of two-shilling tea with hot water thrown in, tip enough.

"Ting! Ting! Ting!"

It is Val Clayton, ordering another drink for himself and his two friends. He drinks vermouth, his friends bottles of beer. Val drinks vermouth because it is foreign (he runs over to Paris frequently, and travels to Egypt for Clayton Brothers and Clayton), and perhaps he makes love to Mrs. Maynard (if you can call it making love) because she too is almost a continental. Since Mrs. Maynard is to be seen in her red ribbons, you might expect to find Val on the beach instead of drinking vermouth in the hotel lounge; but that is far from being "in character" when you know Val. The world's pleasures a little in excess have already set their mark on Val. He will tell you that he would not miss his morning drink, "not for the best woman living." Others may fetch and carry for their hearts' mistresses, but not Val. In the afternoon, perhaps, if he feels a little less jaded, in a hollow of the sandhills and with the warm sun to help, Val may bestir himself a little, but in the meantime he wants another vermouth.

"Ting! Ting! Ting!" — They want to have French waiters here," Val grumbles. "I never mind tipping a waiter if I can get what I want when I want it. *Wai* — oh, you've come, have you? Well, since you are

here, you may as well bring these again, and then see if the papers have come in yet ——”

“And bring me a box of Egyptian cigarettes.”

“No — hi! — don’t bring those cigarettes. — You don’t want to smoke the rubbish they sell here. Fill your case out of this — I’ve a thousand upstairs I brought from Cairo myself ——”

“Oh! . . . Thanks. — Well, as I was saying ——”

And the speaker (who might as well be in Manchester for all he sees of Llanyglo, at any rate in the mornings) resumes some narrative that the replenishing of the glasses has interrupted.

Now the others are dropping in, those who like one *aperatif* before lunch but not half a dozen. Their wives have gone upstairs to tittivate themselves. The velvet chairs fill; extra waiters appear; and a light haze ascends from cigars and cigarettes to the roof. Listen to the restrained hubbub.

“Waiter! *Ting!* Waiter! ——” and then a slight gesture; the waiters are supposed to know the tastes of the real *habitués* by this time; (it counts almost as a “score” if the waiter brings your refection without your having as much as opened your mouth to ask for it). — “The usual, sir — yes, sir — coming!” And again they are talking, not on subjects, but as if the act of talking were itself subject enough. Philip Lacey discusses with Mr. Ashton the improvement in the Harwich-Hook of Holland crossing, and Mr. Morrell exchanges views on Local Government with Raymond Briggs. “*Ting! ting!* You haven’t cassis? Then why haven’t you cassis?” — “Very sorry, sir — coming, sir!” — “What’s happened to the newspapers this morning?” — “Of course, if it goes to arbitration ——” — “Nay, John, don’t drown t’ miller!” “Ten o’clock,

first stop Willesden ——” “Your very good health, Mr. Morrell ——” “Debentures ——” “New heating in both greenhouses ——” —“Same again, Val?” —
“*Ting!*” ——

“BOO-O-O-OOM-M-MMMMM!”

It is the luncheon gong.

Just a glance as they sit at table. Don't you think it's a pleasant room? Three tall windows looking out on the sea, noiseless carpet, ornaments on the sideboards rather like wooden broccoli, but the decorations straight from London. But those two large chandelier gas-brackets don't work yet; the plant isn't installed; that's why the red-shaded oil-lamps are placed at intervals down the T of tables. The older folk gather round the head of the T, and down the stalk stretch the children. These will rise before their parents, just as they go out of Church after the Second Lesson; they will break off just below John Willie Garden and the Misses Euonyma and Wygelia there — who, by the way, are more usually called June and Wy. The flowers are chosen to “last well,” for Llanglo is almost as short of flowers as it is of trees; but the linen and plate and other appointments are all good — these actors in Llanglo's little fore-piece are not accustomed to roughing it, even on a holiday.

As I told you they would, half the women have changed their frocks. Mrs. Lacey is a pink hollyhock now, of which her daughters seem cuttings, and her hat is a sort of pink straw *képi*, trimmed with flowers that resemble virginia stock. She sits at the end of one arm of the T, with her back to the window. Near her is Mrs. Briggs, in stamped electric-blue velvet — her fore-arms, on which bracelets shiver, are as uniform in contour from whatever point you look at them as if they

had been turned in a lathe. The Misses June and Wy also wear bracelets, from which depend bundles of six-pences, a sixpence for each of their birthdays, sixteen for Wiggie, fourteen for June. John Willie is lunching with Percy Briggs to-day, who lunched with him yesterday. Next to his chair is an empty one. It is Mrs. Maynard's, who has not come down yet. Then comes Val Clayton. Over all, with his napkin tucked into his collar as if he had prepared, not for a lunch, but for a shave, Mr. Morrell presides.

For some reason or other, lunch always begins a little stiffly; but they unbend as they go on. At present Raymond Briggs cannot get away from the subject of the newspapers and their unaccountable lateness.

"Can't understand it," he says for the fifth or sixth time.

"And they were late last Wednesday — no, Thursday — no, I was right, it was Wednesday."

"Was it Wednesday?"

"Yes, the day it looked like rain; you remember?"

"Ah, yes; the day it cleared up again."

"All but a drop or two — nothing to hurt ——"

A pause.

"Well, I don't suppose there's anything in them."

"Speaking for myself, I don't care a button. I don't want to see the newspapers. 'No letters, no newspapers,' I always say when I go away."

"A real country holiday, eh?"

"Change and rest — those are the great things."

"You're right. Complete change. No trouble about how you dress nor what you eat. That's the best of this place."

"Still, if the newspapers are coming we may as well know when they are coming."

"They ought to have a man, not that young boy."

"Hugh Morgan?"

"Is that his name? There are so many Morgans."

"Common Welsh name."

"Met another boy, I expect."

"Boys are all alike."

"Not a pin to choose among 'em."

"Wish I was behind him with a stick for all that."

"Another glass of wine, Mr. Ashton?" . . .

Then there enters with a little commotion, and trips half running to the empty chair between John Willie Garden and Val Clayton, Mrs. Maynard. She wears a big black hat swathed in black tulle, and her dress is of black lace, with close sleeves that reach to the middle knuckles of her taper fingers. She shakes out the mitre of her napkin and breaks forth to Val as she settles in her chair.

"My horrid hair!" she pouts; "it always takes me three-quarters of an hour! Really, I shall have to stop bathing, but I do love it so. It seems a kind of fate; I always have to give up the things I love!"

Hereupon Val — or perhaps vermouth, since Val seems a little astonished at his own gallantry — suddenly replies that if he were like that he would have to give up Mrs. Maynard. If Mrs. Maynard also is a little surprised she covers it with great readiness.

"Oh, now the dreadful man's beginning again!" she cries. "If you *will* say those things, Mr. Clayton, I shall have to change places at table!"

Mr. Clayton asks here what is wrong with her hair. — "I think it's champion," he adds. "Very nice indeed," he adds once more.

"Oh, how *can* you!" (As a matter of fact, Mrs.

Maynard's hair is rather wonderful, dark, and so long that she can sit on it.) "No fish, thank you," she says, with a smile to the waiter.

Then Mrs. Lacey's firm voice is heard. "Can anybody tell me whether there have been many wrecks on this coast?"

The person best qualified to give this information is John Willie Garden, but Mrs. Maynard has turned to John Willie, and is asking him whether he does not think she swims rather nicely. Her tendril-like fingers are again stroking his hair. Mrs. Lacey considers Mrs. Maynard's tulle-swathed hat the ostentation of modesty and the coquetry of mourning (if she is in mourning), and, getting no answer to her question about the wrecks, invents a name for Mrs. Maynard: "Mrs. Maynard — as she calls herself." Plates are changed, corks pop, and from time to time a seltzogene gives a spurt and a cough. Raymond Briggs explains that he is fond of strawberries, but strawberries are not fond of him. The chatter grows louder.

"I took her as a kitchen-maid, but she turned out quite a good plain cook ——"

"Oh, like a top — as Dr. Smythe says, it's the air."

"Oh, I *prefer* it rustic; like this!"

"Quite so — the first tripper and I'm off!"

"So I opened her box myself; and there they were, if you please — four silver spoons! ——"

"Now, June, you and Wy talk French — you haven't talked it for days ——"

"John's booked the rooms for next year already ——"

"Oh, *Mis*-ter Clayton! I never promised any such thing!"

"They can talk it if they like, as fast as a mill ——"

"If I were you I should see Tudor Williams about it ——"

"You can put on your oldest things and there's nobody to see you ——"

"But really I'm almost ashamed to go about the fright I do! ——"

"But that's a new dress? ——"

"New! — Last year — but it's good enough for here ——"

"Can't manage those double-l's ——"

"Gutturals ——"

"Llan — Thlan — Lan ——"

"June, your legs are younger than mine — run and get Aunt May's letter out of my dressing-table drawer ——"

"Mrs. Smythe? . . . The best thing for the baby, of course, but I can't help thinking that not *quite* so publicly ——"

"Oh, I always let Percy suck, whoever was there! ——"

"John will have his dinner in the middle of the day ——"

"Smythe? Oh, one of the nicest fellows, but no push, I'm afraid ——"

"That's his failing ——"

"Where he misses it ——"

"Extraordinary ——"

"Well, some men are born like that ——"

"Wait for things to come to them instead of going to fetch them ——"

"Up t' Trwyn? We'll talk about it after I've had my forty winks. I must have my forty winks after my dinner."

"Lunch, William."

“Lunch, then.”

“He *will* call it his dinner ——”

“It is my dinner ——”

Then Mr. Morrell makes a signal, the younger ones troop out, breaking into loud shouts the moment they are clear of the room. They are off to the beach again. Shall we follow them? . . .

What do the Welshmen think of it all? It suits Howell Gruffydd's book, as you see, and Howell has pacified John Pritchard with the promise of Bazaars; but the others? Dafydd Dafis, say?

Again nothing is going right for Dafydd. He feels that another friend has changed towards him — Minetta, to whom he used to sing *Serch Hudol*, and tell his stories of fays and water-beings and knights, and make much of for her elfin looks and quick and un-Saxon ways. For Minetta is already displaying the artist's heartlessness, and does not see the sorrow in Dafydd's eyes, but only what sort of a “head” he has from her special point of view, and how he will “come” upon a piece of paper. She tried to draw Dafydd only the other day, and ordered him, half absently, to turn his head this way and that, and grew petulant when her drawing went all wrong, and suddenly cried “Don't look at me like that!” when Dafydd turned his eyes on her with a tear in the corner of each. Poor Dafydd! He, like the Squire, would be better out of all this swiftly on-coming change. . . .

But Dafydd, who is of the phrase-making kind, has made out of his sadness a phrase that more or less represents the attitude of every Welshman in Llanyglo. He watched all these people coming in ones and twos and threes out of the hotel one morning and walking down to

their deck-chairs and bathing-tents on the beach. He stood for a while, looking at the gay parterre of sunshades and summer clothes, of kites and spades and buckets, and rings on fingers more carefully tended but of coarser stuff than his own. And he listened to the accents that even his alien ear told him were strained and affected and false. And he gave them a half contemptuous and half pitying look as he turned away.

"*These summer things,*" he said. . . .

But Howell Gruffydd has Dafydd Dafis's measure also, and takes it, just as he took John Pritchard's, in a single word.

"*Eisteddfodau,*" he whispered to Dafydd behind his hand. . . .

For they may by and by be advertising Llanyglo by means of an Eisteddfod, and, as long as he is allowed to play, Dafydd does not greatly care who he plays to nor whether they understand him or not.

IV

YNYS

THERE came one day at about that time a Welsh gipsy fortune-teller to Llanyglo. Her name was Belle Lovell, she was a known character all over the countryside, and she was some sort of a connection of Dafydd Dafis's. There was always a packet of tobacco for her in the Squire's kitchen when she appeared, and her companion on her travels was her thirteen-years-old daughter Ynys.* Belle sold baskets and mended chairs, and Ynys drew the cart, which was no more than a large deal packing-case mounted on four perambulator wheels, and with two flat shafts roughly nailed to its sides. The mother's boots, which you might have hit with a hammer and not have dented, resembled grey old wooden dug-outs; the child went barefooted and barelegged, and it would have been a stout thorn that could have pierced the calloused pads of her hardened soles.

These two appeared at Llanyglo at midday, ate their frugal meal on the doorstep of Dafydd's single-roomed cottage behind the Independent Chapel, and then, leaving the cart behind them, strolled down to have a look at that splendacious new caravan, Howell Gruffydd's shop. Belle, her greenish light brown eyes never for a moment still, gossiped with her old acquaintances; her daughter, whose head was as steadily held as if she balanced an invisible pitcher on it, stood looking at the

* Pron. "Unnis."

green butterfly-nets and red-painted buckets, admiring, but no more desiring them than she would have desired anything else impossibly beyond her reach. Her mother joined a group about Mrs. Roberts's door; the visitors, who had lunched, began to descend to the beach again; and there approached down the path that led to the Hafod Unos Ned, the oldest of the Kerrs.

Now Ned had run across Belle on many alder-expeditions, and, while the invasion of "summer things" had not driven Ned into naturalisation as a Welshman, it had, by emphasising the distinction between the well-to-do and the poor of the world, shown him how to jog along in peace with his neighbours. He gave Belle an intelligent grin, and jerked his head in the direction of the bathing-tents.

"Well, mother," he said, "ye've dropped in at just about th' right time."

"There iss no wrong time for seeing friends," Belle replied, in an up-and-down and very musical Welsh accent.

"Nay, I wanna thinking-g o' that," Ned replied, strongly doubling the "g" that terminated the present participle. "I wor thinking-g of a bit o' fortune-telling. There's a lot ovver yonder wi' more brass nor sense, and it allus tickles 'em to talk about sweethearts an' sich."

"Indeed Llanyglo has become grea-a-at big place, whatever," the gipsy replied, and continued her conversation with Mrs. Roberts.

And presently, whether she took the hint or whether she had come precisely for that purpose, Belle's greenish-brown eyes roved again, she made a slight gesture to Ynys, who had turned from the butterfly-nets and was looking out to sea, and the pair of them made off along

the beach in the direction of that bright plot of colour that made as it were a herbaceous border between the grey-green tussocks and the glittering sea.

For a hundred yards Belle's dug-outs left behind her a heavy shuffling track in the sand, parallel with the light kidney-shaped prints of the child who walked as if she carried an invisible pitcher on her head; and then, with the cluster of tents and parasols still far ahead, they stopped. John Willie Garden and Percy Briggs, with Eesaac Oliver Gruffydd ready to bear a hand if called upon to do so, but otherwise a little fearful of intruding, were victualling the blue-and-white collapsible boat for a cruise. But it was not in order to tell the fortunes of the three boys that Belle stopped. She stopped for the same reason that the street-seller pulls out his rattle or his conjuring trick, while his quicksilver eyes dart this way and that in search of his crowd. The only difference was that Belle was her own conjuring-trick. The gesture with which she performed it was superbly negligent. She had a wonderful old mignonette-coloured shawl, which, when she had talked with the group about Mrs. Roberts's doorstep, had been drawn up over her head; and suddenly she allowed it to fall to her shoulders. The effect might well have carried twice the distance it was intended to carry. Out of the folds of the shawl her neck rose as erect as the pistil of an arum lily. Against it gleamed her heavy gold earrings. Her cheekbones and the nodule of her high nose gleamed like bronze, and about the whorl of the springing of her hair at the back of her head the sunshine made as it were a sun-dog on the lustrous blackness. Her silver wedding-ring, an old tweed jacket that might have belonged to her kinsman Dafydd Dafis, and a patched old indigo petticoat, completed the legerdemain.

Ynys, clad to all appearances in a single garment only, watched the boys exactly as she had watched the balls and butterfly-nets and buckets outside Howell Gruffydd's shop.

They too made a shining *coup d'œil*. There was just swell enough to set the long breakers hurdling in, and wind enough to take the tops off them in rattling showers of brilliant spray. Indeed it was so merry a sea that, not half an hour before, Mrs. Maynard had declared to John Willie that she had come within an ace of drowning during her bathe that morning, and had asked him whether, had he seen her in difficulties, he would have come to her rescue. "Mmmmm, John Willie?" she had asked, curling his hair with her perfumed fingers; but John Willie, seeing Percy Briggs approaching, had jerked away his head. This had not been because he had been afraid of being laughed at by Percy. For that matter, Percy had confided to John Willie only a week before that he "liked their Minetta," and so was in no position to jeer at the softer relations. No; it had merely been that, as Llanyglo's curtain had risen, suddenly revealing a soft and alluring group of Euonymas and Wygelias and Hildas, not to speak of Mrs. Maynard herself, all temptingly set out like fruit upon a stall, the curtain of John Willie Garden's peculiar privacy had come down with a run. Mrs. Maynard was always trying to peep behind it, but probably there was nothing behind. Probably that was the reason it had come so sharply and closely down. No boy wants to show that he has nothing to show.

Smack! — A bucketful of spray drenched the stores, and the wave ran hissing and creaming back under the counter of the blue-and-white boat. John Willie shouted rather crossly to Eesaac Oliver.

“Pull her up a bit, can’t you, instead of standing there doing nothing!”

Eesaac Oliver started to life and obeyed. He was rather a fetcher and carrier for these more happily circumstanced boys, but privately he knew himself to be in some things their superior. To tell the truth, Eesaac Oliver knew just a lee-tle too much about what went on within himself, and communicated it just a lee-tle too readily to others. For he dropped no curtain; on the contrary, the windows of his soul were flung wide open. The experience of the world he had acquired at the school at Porth Neigr had already caused him to declare himself as being thenceforward powerfully on the side of the angels; and that ingenious educational exercise which consists of speaking extempore on any subject given only a moment ago had a lee-tle abnormally developed certain natural powers of expression which his race rarely lacks. Had Mrs. Maynard attempted to stroke Eesaac Oliver’s hair (which was thick and black, and rose in a great lump in front, falling thence in a lappet over his pale forehead), he would either have cried “Apage!” or else, suffering the seduction, would have undergone torments of remorse afterwards.

Therefore it was with a meek dignity that Eesaac Oliver bore a hand with the boat, and then fell back and a little enviously watched again.

Then that crafty and stately piece of legerdemain of Belle’s had its reward. In his rippling cream alpaca, there approached along the sands Mr. Morrell himself, and Belle’s neck no longer resembled the pistil of an arum lily. She bent ingratiatingly forward; as if a key had clicked, a dazzling smile cut her face into two; and after a jocular word or two Mr. Morrell bore her off, Ynys following. Let us follow too.

Do look at the contrast — those summer things, and the two wanderers in whom all the seasons are ingrained; carefully veiled and sunburn-cured complexions, and these other vagrants, brown as the upturned earth; the indefatigable maintenance of artificial attitudes even before one another, and the grave ease of the child, the deliberate gesture with which the mother looses as it were in the sheath the only weapon she has against the world. . . . Frith's "*Derby Day?*" Yes, it is a little like it; but listen. Mrs. Maynard, with a sparkling glance about her that says "Mum," has slipped off her wedding-ring, and Belle has taken her hand. It is slim as a glove that has never been put on, and Mrs. Maynard intends to trip Belle if she can.

So, when Belle begins to promise Mrs. Maynard a husband who shall be such-and-such, there are winks and glances and nudges, as much as to say that now they are going to have some fun, and Mr. Morrell says, "Here, ho'd on a bit, mother — how do you know she isn't married?"

If Belle shows the knife for a moment, she does it so delicately that nobody notices it.

"If the prit-ty lady was married, her man he srink a ring upon her finger, red-hot, as they srink a tyre on a cart-wheel," Belle replies; and the reading of Mrs. Maynard's palm continues.

Mrs. Lacey, a pale blue hollyhock, looks as if she pooh-poohed the whole thing; but inwardly she is a-tremble with eagerness to have the fortunes of her two daughters told. As it happens, no sooner is Mrs. Maynard's hand dropped than Mr. Morrell, who happens to be standing next to June, catches her by the arm.

"Come on, June, and be told how to get a husband!" he cries, and he slips a shilling into Belle's hand.

June will never be prettier than she is now. She is indeed very pretty — apple-blossom and cream, bright-haired, freshly starched, back straight and elbows well down, and as glossy from top to toe as the broad mauve ribbon of her sash. Soon she will be as tall as her mother; already she is taller than her father, the landscape-gardener; and the thought of whether she will marry or not, and whether brilliantly or otherwise, never enters her head. Of course she will marry, and of course her marriage will be a brilliant one. “Marriage” and “brilliant marriage” are one and the same thing. In this, as in most other things, Wygelia is of the same opinion as June. A close understanding, which has not yet outgrown the form of surreptitious kicks under the table, and private and abbreviated words, exists between the two sisters. Other things being equal, they would probably prefer to marry two brothers.

“I tell the prit-ty miss a harder thing than that — I tell her how to keep her man when she has got him,” Belle replied amid laughter; and she proceeds to describe June’s husband. He is to come over the water (landing at Newhaven, Mrs. Lacey instantly concludes, and taking the first train to the Boarding School at Brighton), and he shall be devoted to her, and she shall have such-and-such a number of children. (Mrs. Lacey straightens her back; this is something like; her grandfather, whom she remembers quite well, was June’s great-grandfather, and will have been the great-great-grandfather of June’s boys and girls, which is getting on, especially when you remember the younger sons and grandsons of somebodies, who are estate-bailiffs and engine-drivers and carriers of milk-cans in the Colonies.) When June’s fortune is finished all applaud her, as if

she had performed some feat of skill, and then Mr. Morrell seizes Wy.

“Come on, Wy — no hanging back — let’s see what sort of a fist Wy’s going to make of it ——”

And Wy also is haled forward, blushing and conscious and biting her lip, and is told that for her too somebody is languishing, and that presently he will drink out of her glass and thenceforward think her thoughts, which are already complex. And Hilda’s palm is read, and little Victoria Smythe’s fat one, and Val Clayton’s, and others, and silver rains into Belle’s palm. Chaffingly Mr. Morrell offers her a sovereign for her takings, uncounted, but is refused. Then Mrs. Briggs “wants the boys done,” and somebody is despatched along the shore for Percy and John Willie, and as they arrive, bearing their bottles of milk and parcels of jam-sandwiches (for the blue-and-white boat had been paid off), there comes up also Minetta, carrying her sketching-kit. She stands peering at Ynys, more as seeing in her a subject than as at a fellow-being.

So, idly and laughingly, an hour of the summer afternoon passes; and then an accident mars its harmony. John Willie and Percy, feeling the pangs of thirst, had drunk their milk and had then set up the bottle as a mark to throw stones at; and Ynys, walking down to the sea-marge, has set her foot upon a piece of the broken glass. Unconcernedly she bathes the cut in the salt water.

But as the laughing group breaks up, and her mother calls her again, the blood wells out once more, dabbling with a dark stain those light kidney-shaped prints in the sand. Mrs. Garden and Mrs. Briggs see the child’s plight simultaneously. It is a cruel gash, and the two ladies utter loud cries.

“Nay, nay, whativver in the world!” cries Mrs. Briggs, all of her that is not pure mother suddenly becoming pure Hunslet. “Nay, nay! Come here, doy! ——”

She and Mrs. Garden kneel down before the gipsy child, and a dozen others gather round. Cries of sympathy break out.

“T’ poor bairn! ——”

“What a mess!”

“How did she do it?”

“John Willie, quick, run and get the kettle from the picnic-basket ——”

“Indeed, lady dear, it iss noth-thing ——”

“Quick, Ray, give me your handkercher too ——”

Yny’s foot is bathed in fresh water from the picnic-kettle, and bound up with Mrs. Briggs’s tiny lace handkerchief, with Raymond’s large one over it to secure it. The blood has already come through before the tying is finished. And you forget the false accents and the elaborate pretences of these “summer things” of Llanyglo’s little preliminary piece, and remember only the better things that lie beneath them. They flatter Ynys, and encourage her with admiring words.

“She’s a very brave little girl, anyway!”

“What did you say her name was?”

“Ynys.”

“Well done, Ynys! Soon be well ——”

“John Willie, I’ve told you about throwing stones at bottles before — get you home till I come ——”

“And you too, Percy Briggs; and you dare to stir out till I tell you!”

“Don’t cry, little girl ——”

Ynys has no thought whatever of crying. She makes no more motion than a pine makes when it bleeds its

gouts of resin in the spring. But they continue to comfort her.

“She’ll never be able to walk like that!”

“Better fetch Gilbert Smythe.”

“June, you run ——”

“Here’s half a crown for you, Ynys, for being a brave little girl.”

Then Minetta, who has been conferring with Belle, speaks.—“All right, mother, she’s to come home with us; I’m going to paint her.”

“There, now, Ynys, you’re going to be painted! Won’t that be fun!”

“And if she ever comes to Liverpool and asks for me,” says Philip Lacey, “I’ll see she’s all right. Yes, I will. She shall sell flowers. That’ll be better than going about barefoot and getting her poor little foot cut, won’t it?”

But at that, for the first time, the child seems to see and to hear. Her eyes, greenish-brown and deep like her mother’s, look into Philip Lacey’s small but kindly ones as if she had not seen him before. The half-crown Philip has given her is still tightly clasped in her hand, but then half crowns are things that do sometimes visit people precisely like that. And she knows that they have some mystic power or virtue by means of which they can buy things — green butterfly-nets and red-painted buckets; but Ynys can not quite understand the people who can sell these wondrous things for mere half-crowns. . . . Then she realises again that somebody has just said something about selling flowers. . . .

They are promising her that if she is a brave little girl and lets Doctor Smythe dress her foot she shall one day sell flowers. . . .

Sometimes, meeting Belle Lovell and her daughter

upon the road, the one with her loops of cane upon her back and the other drawing the cart made of the deal box mounted upon perambulator wheels, you will give them good-day and pass on; and then, five minutes or so afterwards perhaps, you will be conscious of an almost noiseless pattering behind you, and will turn. It is Ynys, holding out to you a little posy of hedge-flowers. She may not refuse your penny for them; indeed she will not; but you are not to suppose that it is for the penny that she has brought you the nosegay. The poor sticky little thing is unpurchasable. You would have got it just the same had you been as poor as herself.

PART THREE

I

THE HOLIDAY CAMP

THE writer of the *Sixpenny Guide to Llanyglo and Neighbourhood*, in speaking of the rise of the town, made use of an obvious image which we will take leave to borrow from him. "Thenceforward," he wrote, "Llanyglo sprang up as if by magic out of the soil itself."

Indeed it did something like it. Watching it, you would have thought of one of Philip Lacey's gardens in the short days before Spring had begun to warm the air. Neat, bare, brown, friable soil, with not yet a crocus or a snowdrop to be seen; here and there a stick with a tiny linen tab fluttering (reminding you of Terry Armfield's little "*Keep off the Grass*" board with "Delyn Avenue" written upon it); frames half open and inverted bells, dibbing-strings, sprinklings of lime, and a few whirligigs to keep the birds away; these, and the promise of the scent and colour to come — it did indeed resemble Llanyglo. Not all at once did the pea-sticks become builders' scaffold-poles, the lines of string the plotting-out of streets. As of Philip's gardens, you could not have said of Llanyglo on any particular day, "This has changed more than it was changing yesterday, more than it will be again changing to-morrow." But for all

that, nothing remained any longer the same. Philip's men, working over the blindfold earth with clay and spittle, caused its lids to open; Edward Garden and his associates, similarly, with money for manure, labour to let in the air and light, and the gentle airs of advertisement already fanning an incipient repute, made a garden of stone and iron, with buds of stucco, flowers of paint and glass and gilding, and fruit after its kind to ripen by and by.

Humanity was the soil he worked on, and his knowledge of it the force with which he did so. Its hopes and appetites, its need of noise and change and laughter, its stretching itself after fetters struck off and its resolve to have a better, a much better time than it had ever had before — out of these things came Edward Garden's beds and borders. He would grow flowers of pleasure for those of the towns to pick. And, since you do not advance the glory of July by neglecting to make the most of March, his crops also had their rotation. For this, in a manner of speaking, was Llanyglo's March, and what though it lasted two, three, four years? The Laceys and the Raymond Briggses were to be cultivated while they were yet there. Blooming and falling again, they would make an excellent preparation, and there was plenty to do in the meantime. There were other hotels to build, and a wet-weather pavilion for tea and talk and dancing, and a landing-stage for the twenty new boats, and this and that and the other — and always, always, the coming full summer to look forward to, the summer of ten, eleven, twelve years thence, the summer when, not the Laceys, but the employees of their fourteen or fifteen shops should talk of Llanyglo; the summer when Mr. Morrell should come no more, but his operatives

should draw their thousands from the Clubs and rain them upon the town; the summer when all should be changed but the steadfast Trwyn, and all different save the mountains behind, and nothing the same save the still and watching sea.

The Sarn-Porth Neigr Loop was constructed in 1886-7, and opened in the May of the last-named year. One of its earlier trains brought, in a first-class compartment, Philip and Mrs. Lacey and the Misses June and Wygelia, fresh from Paris; and in a third-class compartment it brought a family called Topham. Mr. Topham was head-clerk in a Liverpool Irish-bacon-importing concern, and Philip Lacey, meeting him once or twice at Philharmonic Promenade Concerts, had forgotten the golden rule that it is easier to get into conversation with a man than it is to shake him off again, and had fallen into the habit of nodding to him. In fact, a sort of acquaintanceship had been struck up. He had learned Topham's name, and Topham his. All this had been in Liverpool.

But it was one thing to strike up an acquaintanceship in Liverpool, and quite another to continue that acquaintanceship elsewhere. Philip Lacey, seeing Barry Topham get into the train, had not doubted that the bacon-importer's clerk would be dropping off again after a few stations. But at Stockport, where Philip had descended to stretch his legs, Topham had met him on the platform and had informed him that he was going to Llanyglo.

Now when Philip went away for a few weeks' change he liked that change to be a change. He didn't come to Llanyglo to meet casuals from Liverpool.

He began to wonder whether Llanyglo was quite what it had been.

And so did Mr. Morrell, who brought his daughter Hilda from Brighton that year.

And so did Val Clayton, who also came that year, merely in order to see what sort of vermouth they sold at the other hotels.

For soon there were three hotels, the original "Cambrian," the "Cardigan," and the "Montgomery." All these were on what by and by became the front, and between the "Cambrian" and the "Cardigan" was a space of perhaps a couple of hundred yards. Thence to the "Montgomery," however, was quite a walk for Val of a morning — a quarter of a mile or more on towards the Trwyn. Of the three hotels the "Montgomery" was the largest. It had sixty bedrooms. Its stabling (for there was now a landau-service up into the mountains) blocked up one of Terry's dream-avenues a hundred yards from where the easy marble steps were to have descended to the shore. A wide metalled road ran past the three hotels, but it reminded you of unexplored rivers on an ancient map, which are traced for a score or a hundred miles, and then dissipate in interrogative dots. Another road at right angles ran past the Kerrs' Hafod to the gap opposite Pritchard's farm, and there were yet other roads, if those widish alleys bounded by stakes and wire could properly be called roads. When the wind rose the sand still whistled everywhere, scouring paint, rounding wooden corners, stinging faces; but so far it had made very little impression on a large, black, tarred notice-board firmly stayed into the sand midway between the "Cardigan" and "Montgomery" hotels, a board bigger than the whole front of the Kerrs' Hafod, which bore a straggling plan upon it in white, and the words:

LEASEHOLD!

For 999 Years!

Lots as Under:

.....

.....

.....

Apply ———

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To tell the truth, Llanyglo was now rather a dreary-looking place. They had broken its sylvan eggs, but had hardly yet begun the making of its urban omelette. The above-mentioned announcement was not the only one of its kind; there was another halfway between the Kerrs' house and Pritchard's, and a third at Pritchard's corner. These, it was known, awoke faint and distant echoes in little paragraphs in Manchester and Liverpool papers. The Company so far was a private one; it hardly knew yet what powers it might presently expect to possess; but Mr. Tudor Williams and others were finding out. As a matter of fact, they were rather anxious about these powers. An Act of Parliament two years before had seemed to promise them certain things that might prove immensely to their advantage; but of the two great Local Government Acts (of 1888 and 1894), the first was still in a plastic state, and the second not yet thought of. Hitherto Porth Neigr had been the centre of administration; it was now being sought to shift that centre. And, with the cumbrous old machinery of Boards of Guardians and Poor Law Overseers out of the way, Howell Gruffydd, it was whispered, might before long become a Councillor. Indeed, who would make a better one? Edward Garden? Edward Gar-

den preferred to depute powers of this kind. The Lacey and Briggses, on a property qualification? These had their own affairs to attend to, and were summer residents only. John Pritchard? Stern John, as unchallenged ruler of the Baptist Chapel, was already a Councillor in a deeper sense than that defined by any mundane Act. William Morgan? Not substantial enough. John Roberts? Dafydd Dafis? The Squire? — The claims of all of them paled before that of Howell Gruffydd the grocer. . . .

The leases were being taken up too. The Llanyglo Pavilion, Limited, was incorporated before a spade was set in the sand. The great blackboard between the Kerrs' house and Pritchard's Corner bore a significant diagonal paper strip with four fifteen-inch letters in red upon it — SOLD. Negotiations were proceeding for the acquisition of the land at the Corner itself. And Edward Garden had completed that rumoured purchase of his far up in the mountains. It was a "catchment area" for water, and if, under the new distribution, the Council should find itself possessed of large borrowing-powers, it might possibly find the private ownership of those hundreds of acres far away up Delyn an awkward matter.

And the excavation was already being made for the row of houses that later was known as "Ham-and-Egg Terrace" — a hundred and fifty yards of building that at first awed Llanyglo by its grandeur, but which they subsequently came to think a poor affair and did their best to conceal.

It was only partly for a holiday that those first visitor-discoverers came to Llanyglo now. Considerations of business had begun to play a part in their coming. Mr. Morrell, for example, had sunk quite a lot of money in

the place, and liked to keep an eye on his interests. Philip Lacey pored over a dozen sketch-drafts of his Floral Valley, a project for converting a coombe or dean that clove one portion of the Trwyn into an ornamental arrangement of flower-beds with a bandstand in the centre. And Raymond Briggs mused on houses and hotels, on hotels and more and yet more houses. For these Llanyglo was no longer simply a place "delightfully rural," a place "where you could dress as you liked," a place for "a real rustic holiday." It was the Tophams who made these discoveries and bestowed these encomiums now.

Whether or not Barry Topham dressed as he liked, he certainly dressed as the Briggses and the Laceys disliked. At the Promenade Concerts his appearance had been just decently unremarkable; alas, it was so no longer! Now, in the country, he broke out into a loose tweed jacket, knickers made of a pair of long trousers of striped cashmere cut down, low shoes, a flannel shirt, no hat, and a tightly knotted red tie, this last as a voucher for the socialism that, Philip Lacey discovered to his horror, he talked in and out of season. He was a small, bearded, wiry man of forty-four or five, who gave you a curious impression of ferocity and mildness mingled. The mildness was perhaps due to his bolt-upright shock of frightened-looking sandy hair, the ferocity to the pince-nez marks on either side of his nose that gave his glance a concentrated look. His wife did not appear to dress (you cannot call mere concealment of the person "dressing") until four o'clock in the afternoon, and his two daughters, aged nineteen and twenty-one, were school-teachers, less buxom than Miss Nancy Pritchard, but more professionally eager, as if all the vital force in them had gone, not to the waste of

mere pleasant flesh, but into the severer regions of the mind.

This taking of Llanyglo at its word in the matter of dress was bad enough, but worse was to come.

Scarcely were the Tophams installed at the "Montgomery" when it became known that, though they had appeared to come alone, they were merely an advance party. Two days later the main body arrived, and Llanyglo experienced its first social slump.

The party called itself a Holiday Camp. It was a union of two semi-secular, semi-Nonconformist Institutions whose idea of having a better time than their fathers had had was to botanise, to geologise, to read, and to discuss these activities afterwards in whirlwinds of communal talk. Strictly speaking, they did not "camp" at all: they put up at the "Montgomery"; but they had camped, hoped to camp again, and called their more convivial gatherings, when studies were cast aside, Pow-Wows.

They overran the place instantaneously. You met them with their brown canvas satchels and japanned tin specimen-cases, poking about up the Trwyn or groping in the boggy patches about Sarn. They were to be met in the lanes, carrying picnic paraphernalia. They lighted fires of driftwood on the shore, which coatless young men blew while the young women combed their hair out in the sun. And wherever they went a little red rash went with them, the rash of the small red-backed book, Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, of which the contagion had raged among them. Not that they had not books of other hues also. They had Hugh Miller's *Old Red Sandstone* in green, and *Selected Sayings* of Marcus Aurelius in brown, and others in various colours; but it was the red that struck the eye

at the greater distance. They and the books were inseparable. The unmarried ones, sharing a book between them, seemed already to be creating that sage community of intellectual interest that, as all the world knows, comes in so very handy when the first fires of love have become less devouringly hot; the married ones, with a book apiece, kept the calm connubial ideal before the maids' and bachelors' eyes. . . . And it was all exceedingly disquieting and difficult to understand. One hoped that the books were portals into high and fair and spacious places, but feared that they might be but pathetic posterns of escape from the world's weary drudgery that has got to be done and that therefore somebody must do. One had struggles of compunction and abasement and doubt, and the humiliating feeling that some clean and heathery and wind-swept place of the mind was being invaded to sadly, sadly little purpose. One tried, desperately tried, to tell oneself that if poor lame Harry Stone got one single half-hour's joy out of it all, nothing else mattered; and then one wondered whether even this was true. It is hard to be social over an anti-social thing. . . . So one bore, humble heart and arrogant heart alike, each his portion of Education's shame.

The coming of the Montgomeryites acted instantaneously. Within an hour of their issuing from their sixty-bedroom hotel, the Cambrians and their deck-chairs and bathing-tents had drawn a little more compactly together on the sands. Certainly the Cambrians did not see why they should take, intellectually, a second place to these loftily and botanically thinking ones, merely because they chose to pay a little attention to appearances also. Moreover, the fact that the Reading Party had come to Llanyglo only for a fortnight filled

the Briggses and the Laceys with a certain compassion. This was not compassion that the ecstasies with which a zoophyte was discovered, or the glad cries with which a bit of sundew was hailed, must be such transient joys. It was rather compassion that the Montgomeryites should find the place pristine. Llanyglo "pristine" — now! . . . "Ah," they thought, "they wouldn't think that if they'd known it as *we* knew it — two houses and a single hotel only!" . . . The thought opened a vista. Perhaps, in time to come, these Utopians would tell others how, when *they* first set eyes on Llanyglo, the place had not begun to be spoiled, but had had three hotels only, a dozen or so houses, Ham-and-Egg Terrace, and a blackboard here and there that had emphasised rather than detracted from its virgin charm. And these others would pass it on to others still, and so it would go on, and so, in one sense, Llanyglo would never grow. There would always be somebody who had known it before somebody else, and would say, "Ah, yes, but you ought to have seen it *then!*" . . . Well, thought the Cambrians, perhaps it was a good thing. To have inferiors is one of the great solaces of Life, and they supposed that the Tophams also had their inferiors. Perhaps some day a tripper would look even on Philip Lacey's Floral Valley with much the same shock of delight with which Eve opened her eyes on the dew of Eden. . . .

A sorely tried man now was Philip. Sadly he lamented the evening that had taken him and Barry Topham to the same Philharmonic Concert in Liverpool. For the starched and hotpressed ones of the "Cambrian," though they did not openly say so, held him as in a manner responsible for this inferior spilling all over their idyllic place. They seemed to be trying

to make out that the Tophams were Philip's chosen friends. Philip felt this to be unfair. It was an accident that might have happened to anybody, and Philip's views on culture and the multitude were every bit as sound as Raymond Briggs's own. And as Philip did not intend to be sat upon by Raymond Briggs or anybody, he acted well, nay, even nobly. He had recognised Topham; very well. He had not positively encouraged the fellow, but say that certain narrow-minded persons wished to make it appear that he had done so; well again. He would stand by what he had done. He would ask the Tophams to dinner at his hotel.

He did so, and took the disastrous consequences. For the Tophams came, and, with the eyes of the whole "Cambrian" upon them, behaved for all the world as if they had been dining at their own inferior Liberty Hall of a "Montgomery." So at least it seemed to Philip, and bad enough surely that would have been; but Mrs. Lacey made it far, far worse. It was plain as plain could be (she said afterwards) that the Tophams' sprawls and freedoms were all put on, and that they had been like four fishes out of water every minute of the time — he ought to be ashamed of himself, showing them up before everybody's eyes like that! . . . "Come as you are," Philip Lacey had said, with the truest delicacy, since it was very unlikely that the Tophams had brought evening clothes to their Camps and Pow-Wows; and so nobody dressed. The "Cambrian's" tables were no longer arranged in the form of a T. With the installation of gas, numerous smaller tables, with a couple of large oval ones among them, had taken its place, and at one of the oval tables the four Laceys and the four Tophams sat. Mr. Lacey was at one end, with Mrs. Topham on his right, Mrs. Lacey

was at the other end with Mr. Topham on her right. At the sides sat the younger ones, a Topham and a Lacey on either side. This was not the happiest of arrangements, since young ladies who have just "finished" in Paris usually think they have seen enough of school-teachers for some time to come, but it was the best that could be managed. Nor could Miss June kick Miss Wy under the table.

The discord showed from the very first moment. The Laceys, as urbane hosts, would have kept to such light and frothy conversational matters as how the Tophams liked Llanyglo, whether they had been up into the mountains yet, and similar subjects; but not so the Tophams. Briefly, they went for the eternal verities like four steam-navvies. Before she had unfolded her napkin, Mrs. Topham had Philip Lacey helpless in the toils of More's *Utopia*, and by the time she had asked him half a dozen searching questions, looking mistrustfully at him as much as to say, "You *dare* to lie to me, sir!" the unhappy man had to confess that it was some time since he had read the book, and that his textual memory was by no means as good as it had been. A second attack rendered him abject. The third was not delivered. Seeing him such a rank and pitiable outsider, Mrs. Topham contemptuously spared him.

"And *this* is the state of education to-day!" she said scornfully to her husband afterwards. . . .

Mr. Topham, in the meantime, tackled Mrs. Lacey on certain problems of the Distribution of Wealth, with no happier results. Quite simply, Mrs. Lacey was unaware that such problems existed save insofar as they were included in the specific question of marriage-settlements for daughters. She scarcely troubled to answer Mr. Topham, but, glancing from June and Wy

to the Misses Amy and Norah Topham, lost herself in the problems of the Distribution of Proposals instead. So she too, from the point of view of those who carried Mill and Smith in their pockets and read these inhuman authors in the shade of the crumbling Dinas, became an outsider.

But worst of all fared the Misses June and Wy; for the Topham sisters had brought with them from Liverpool a holiday-pamphlet, which consisted of forty-two questions, three of which, daily for a fortnight, the holiday-maker was advised to ask himself. So:

“As I came along the beach this afternoon,” said Miss Amy to June, with a chatty note in her voice, but the enthusiasm for knowledge smouldering in her eyes, “I observed great quantities of seaweed. To what uses are seaweeds put?”

And said Miss Norah to Wy, slightly puckering her shining and melon-like forehead:

“One of the boatmen told me yesterday that in the Spring large masses of the vernal squill are to be found upon the hills near here. Why is this?”

Then Miss Amy again:

“There are fine examples of contorted strata on the other side of the Trwyn. Perhaps you or your sister can tell me the reason why these strata are contorted?”

And again Miss Norah:

“Who was Taliesin? When did he flourish? Tell me anything you know about him.”

Dearly would June and Wy have liked to reply, in the words of Mrs. Briggs when the hotel-manager had looked at her boots, “Don’t if it hurts you!” Wiggie nicknamed Miss Norah Topham “The Vernal Squill” on the spot; June, a phanerogam herself, dubbed Miss Amy “The Club Moss.”

After that dinner, there was nothing for Philip Lacey to do but to live his indiscretion down.

But if this was the "Cambrian's" attitude to the "Montgomery," it was not that of the Welshmen of Llanyglo. These were now more in number, for half the staffs of the three hotels were Welsh, and others also had scented prosperity in the air. Within a few hours friendly relations had been established between the natives and the readers of *Utopia*. A Welshman's eyes will always sparkle at the sight of a book or other piece of the apparatus of knowledge, and the Montgomeryites, friendly souls all and ready chatters with whomsoever they met, began to drop into Howell's shop of a morning. None too reluctantly, they suffered themselves to be drawn out by Howell on the subjects of their studies, and then it was that Howell became a proud man indeed. For he produced Eesaac Oliver, home once more from Aberystwith College. Without even having the titles given to him as he came in at the door that divided the shop from the dwelling-rooms behind, Eesaac Oliver swapped them book for book. Howell's breast swelled. "Blodwen — Blodwen — come quick!" he called. Then, with his eyes sparkling like bits of mica in a pebble and his small teeth gleaming like a double row of barley, he looked fondly on the assembly and murmured, "Dear me, I did not know till to-day there wass so-o-a many books written!" One morning Mrs. Briggs and Mrs. Garden came in in the very middle of one of these galas of the intellect. They were kept waiting for a minute and more. There were times when the Llanyglo Stores almost resembled a Debating Room.

It was left to the Misses Euonyma and Wygelia Lacey to restore the balance that their father's luckless dinner-

party had disturbed; and right well they laboured to that end. They brought all the resources of Brighton and Paris to bear upon those two amiable but indefatigable school-teachers, the sisters Topham. They did not avoid them; on the contrary, they put their heads together and then went out in search of them. Then, when they had met them, they asked them to tell them whether it was true that the guillemot laid its blunt-ended egg in order that it should not roll off ledges, and whether the person who said that serviceable knife-handles could be made of the stems of the Great Oar Weed had been correctly informed. And when they failed to come upon their unsuspecting victims, they catechised one another.

“As I was ascending the mountains the other day,” June would suddenly break out in the Vernal Squill’s raised and staccato voice, “I found myself walking upon grass. What is grass? State reasons for your answer.”

And Wiggie, assuming the *viva voce* examination tones of the Club Moss, would ask her sister what a man was, and whether Eesaac Oliver Gruffydd could properly be classed as one.

Failing the turning up of those two marriageable brothers, the Misses June and Wy were likely to be what Mrs. Briggs called “bad to suit.”

It was when the *Utopia*-readers had been at the “Montgomery” rather more than half their time that the first bruit went abroad of the jollification that presently made memorable the eve of their departure. Nor was this jollification to be confined to their own set. All (as afterwards at the Llanyglo P.S.A. Meetings) were to be welcome. The project was talked over, at first informally at the Llanyglo Stores, afterwards more

seriously at the "Montgomery"; and a few days later the rumour was confirmed by print. Eesaac Oliver Gruffydd and Hugh Morgan distributed a number of handbills, thrusting them into folk's hands in the stake-and-wire-enclosed streets, pushing them under doors, and even entering that Reservation on the shore where the Cambrians sat stiffly, reading their novels, toying with their fancy-work, or dozing after lunch. Then, on the land-agents' blackboards and in the windows of the Llanyglo Stores, larger bills appeared. Large bills and small alike read as follows:

Llanyglo Holiday Camp, July, 1887.

THE AIGBURTH STREET AND CHOW BENT
SQUARE UNITED READING CIRCLES

beg to announce that a
GRAND POW-WOW

will be held in the Dinas, the Trwyn, Llanyglo,
on

Friday Evening, the 22nd, at 8.30 sharp.

BRING YOUR REFRESHMENTS!
BRING YOUR VOICE LOZENGES!
BRING YOUR MUSIC!
BRING YOUR LANTERNS!
BRING YOUR FRIENDS!

Visitors and Residents alike are Welcome!
Songs!! Recitations!!! Short Speeches!!!!

LADIES SPECIALLY INVITED!

Grand Chief: *Deputy Grand Chief:*
BARRY TOPHAM, Esqr. HOWELL GRUFFYDD, Esqr.

Committee:

The Proceedings will open with the singing of
“*God Save the People,*”
and will close with “*Hen Wlad fy Nhadau.*”

EDWARD JONES, PRINTER, PORTH NEIGR. 0616.

“Boy!” called Raymond Briggs, as Eesaac Oliver, having distributed this announcement to the occupants of the Reservation, was passing on; and Eesaac Oliver turned. “Pick those papers up at once!” Raymond ordered, pointing to a litter of handbills where the wavelets lapped the marge of seaweed. Then, over his shoulder to Philip Lacey, who reclined almost horizontally in the next deck-chair: “Making a mess of the beach like that! Paper wherever you go; they’re as bad as a lot of trippers! Can’t make out what you see in that fellow Topham——”

Philip, who was frowning over the handbill, spoke, also over his shoulder.—“You going to this?”

Raymond gave a short laugh.—“Me?”

It was almost as if he said, “I didn’t ask them to dinner, my dear man! *I’m* perfectly free to stop away!”

“Good. We’ll have a game of chess, then,” Philip replied off-handedly. He could give Raymond pawn and move.

Outside the Reservation, however, little but the Pow-Wow was talked of. Howell Gruffydd had looked the word up in his little English-Welsh Dictionary, and, though he had failed to find it, he was none the less set-up at the thought of being a Deputy Grand Chief. But he became thoughtful again when there arrived for him a bundle from Barry Topham, which, on being opened, was found to contain a pair of very much creased mocca-

sins, a broad-striped blanket, and a head-dress of feathers similar to the one the Grand Chief himself was to wear. Howell had remembered Dafydd Dafis. Dafydd might not like him to bedeck himself thus, and what Dafydd might think always mattered a great deal in Llanyglo. Dafydd, his old corduroys notwithstanding, stood for the integrity of Nationalism, and even Howell, willing to be English, must be careful not to be too English — or, in the present case, too Indian.

But the aliens themselves showed no such reserve. They had bracketed a Welsh name with an English one on their handbill, had placed *Hen Wlad* by the side of *God Save the People*, and been otherwise hearty; and they did not know that even in their hospitality they were a little bustling, urgent, and compelling. As for differences of race, such things were presently about to be abolished. So they bade Llanyglo almost boisterously welcome to its own Trwyn, and Barry Topham, passing Dafydd Dafis on the afternoon of the day of the celebration, shouted cheerily over his shoulder, "Don't forget your harp, Davis. I'm not going to call you 'Dafis'— we'll make an Englishman of you before we've done with you! Eight-thirty sharp. . . . Eh? . . . Stuff and nonsense! Fiddlededee! What sort o' talk's that, man alive! Of course you're bringing your harp!"

It was on a dullish summer evening, and none too warm up there, that the Montgomeryites, in threes and fours and sixes, began the ascent of the Trwyn. Some of them had already set match to their lanterns, though the Trwyn beam was not alight yet, and they carried with them more than one copy of *The Scottish Students' Song Book*. They tried their voices as they climbed, and called to one another, pointing out false easy ways

and bursting into laughter when the misdirected ones had to return again; and the Trwyn sheep started up from before their feet and fled, baa-ing. The refreshments had gone on ahead, as also had the fuel for the camp-fire, but no Welshmen were to be seen yet. Perhaps, gruff heartiness notwithstanding, they felt that they were guests who should have been hosts. Perhaps they felt that here was not the urgency there had been on the only other occasion when they and the Saxon had rushed hurriedly and tumultuously together — that wild nightfall when Ned Kerr, from the roof of the new Hafod Unos, had seen something out in the lair of grey, and, with a cry of "*Llongddrylliad!*" Celt and new-comer had flung themselves into an open boat pell mell.

But by and by they also began to move in a body slowly along the shore, sometimes over the dry, sometimes plodding over their own reflections in the ebb. There was no pointing out false ascents to them. Eesaac Oliver Gruffydd, who came first, had fetched eggs too often from the Trwyn light not to know every cranny of the promontory, and his father remembered the building of the lighthouse. Howell had seen them, as a boy, locking and dowelling the great blocks of masonry, shaped each like an intricate Chinese puzzle; and in thirty odd years the Light seemed to have become almost as much part of the headland as the ancient Dinas itself. That seemed to be the way with building. Even Edward Garden's house seemed a settled thing now. So, in another year or two, would the "Montgomery," the "Cardigan," Ham-and-Egg Terrace. And Howell reflected that stones meant grocery-orders. But that was not all. If he must be English, but not too English for Dafydd Dafis, he must still be careful

to be the right sort of English. He made little out of these *Utopia* readers. They simply came in under the "Montgomery's" contract. The Briggses and Laceys still provided the richer yield. Whether was the better — the "Montgomery," where one visitor would presently be creeping into a bed that his predecessor had left still warm, or these more prosperous ones, who, Howell knew, would presently come no more? . . . Moreover, he was already feeling the pressure of outside competition. Ellis, of Porth Neigr, was even now quoting cutting rates for the "Cardigan's" butter and cheese, and for a long time Llanyglo had had to depend on outsiders for its milk. The railway, that brought people, also brought their provender. . . .

Oh, don't think for a moment that Howell was prospering without giving deep thought to things!

They gained the Dinas, where already the fire was yellow and crackling, and stood smiling Good evenings, as if they waited to be asked inside.

How long ago it was since the foundations of that Dinas had been sprinkled with the blood of Merlin — how long ago it was since the Red and White Dragons had contended about it, now one gaining the advantage, now the other — how long ago these things had been, not even Miss Amy Topham would have dared to ask June Lacey. Now it resembled a grey old heel of cheese, with a little scabbling in one corner. This scabbling was where Bert Stoy, one of the younger and most indefatigable of the Readers, had hoped he might find a British grave.

"We thought you'd maybe changed your minds about coming," were the words with which Barry Topham welcomed them. He was an Indian, but a bearded one, and he bustled here and there, wanting to know where

So-and-So was, and whether this requisite or that had been brought up, and seeing to this and the other. The goblin shadows of eighteen or twenty of the Readers danced on the ruined works, and the sky behind their illumined faces was of a sad and leaden lavender hue. The lanterns made little patches in the short grass; matches lighted faces momentarily; and then suddenly there broke out over the shoulder of the headland and continued thenceforward, the Light. Red, red, white — red, red, white — it was numbing, intolerable. It dyed the clouds that seemed to sag over the earth as the ceiling-sheets sagged in the cottages, and its glare was not lost high overhead now, as it had been on that night when the Kerrs had rested for their “nooning” in the midst of their building of their Hafod. The staggering blaze passed not twenty feet above them, seeming to stumble and trip over the cloud-folds, and driving the revellers to fresh places with their backs to it. You would have said that those ancient Red and White Dragons had come to life again and were chasing one another across the rafters of the night.

Then Barry Topham, placing himself by a jagged tooth of rock, held up his hand for silence. He had motioned Howell Gruffydd to his side, and had pointed at somebody’s cap. His fingers tweaked a tuning-fork; he set the vibrating prong against his teeth; he gave them a soft note — “Doh ——” and then:

*“When wilt Thou save the people,
O God of Mercy, when? . . .”*

Then when it was finished, Barry again stood with uplifted hand. Caps were put on again by such as wore them.

“Not weft enough,” was Barry’s brief comment on

the singing; the Welsh, unfamiliar with the air, had not sung. "Never mind; it might ha' been worse.— Now I'm just going to say a few words, and then we'll make a start."

And he began.

"Well, we've been here a fortnight now, and I think we've all enjoyed it. I have for one. Some of us has been up these grand mountains, finding out how they were made, and some of us has been improving ourselves among the rocks and on the shore. Some of us has botanised, and some's collected butterflies, and one and all we've read the books set down for us in the Syllabus. That's a job done, at all events.

"But I think we shall one and all admit that we've a great deal to learn about Llanyglo yet. There'd still be something to learn if we were to come here six, ten, twenty times. That's the grand thing about knowledge—we need never be afraid we shall come to the end of it. When we've read fifty books there's always fifty more. Ay, and there'll be another fifty after that.

"But we've got other things besides knowledge at Llanyglo. We've got health, health to keep us going for another year. And we've got friends, new friends. I think we can say," here he laid his hand on Howell's shoulder, "that we've all done the little bit that in us lies to break down prejudices and dislikes and racial differences. We've had our quarrels, us Welsh and English, in the past; no doubt there's been battles fought on this very spot; but that's all over, and, speaking as Grand Chief for the year, though unworthy to succeed Comrade Walker, who occupied this same position last year at our Holiday Camp at Keswick, I think I may say we've buried the hatchet now. So in the name of

one and all I greet these friends of ours. I think it does us both good to come together like this. They're a bit — what shall I say? — on the poetical side, perhaps; more romantic than us; we're just plain, practical folk that has to tew for our livings; but what I mean is, it's a good thing for both of us to get to understand one another. We do understand one another now, and I'm sure we're all very glad to see them here." (Applause, and cries from the Lancashire men of "Good old Wales!") "You here that, Gruffydd — Comrade Gruffydd? That's hearty. That's Lancashire. No flowers o' speech, but we say a thing and mean it. And we mean it when we say we're very glad to see you indeed, and hope this won't be our last visit to Llanyglo.— And now I won't take up any more of your time. We've a long programme before us, and I see that the first item is ——" he consulted a paper in his hand, "—— is the old favourite, *There is a Tavern*. What's the key, Harry? C? (Doh, lah — lah, te, doh ——)."

And with the singing of *There is a Tavern in the Town* the Pow-Wow began.

Did they come to understand one another the better for it? Were they who took part in that Pow-Wow so "poetical and romantic" for the one part, so blunt and rough and practical for the other? Did a score or so of Saxons suddenly and miraculously cease that night to belong to the world's most sentimental race, and were the hearts of as many Celts as miraculously changed? No doubt it all seemed simple enough to Barry Topham. Hard-rinded himself, but not without a generous juice within, he would have found it hard to believe that pulpier fruits existed, with a stone inside he would but crack his teeth upon. Perhaps — perhaps — it was not so; and yet — what, after all, can the victor do to

the vanquished more than vanquish him? . . . Barry saw their smiles only, and for every smile they received they gave three. The jovial Campers became ever bluffer and heartier and fonder of them as song followed song. Nor did the Welshmen refuse to sing. Enlightened Young Wales, in the person of Eesaac Oliver Gruffydd, was presently to be seen with his back to the intolerable Trwyn beam while the Dragons of the Light chased one another behind his head; and his voice was lifted up in *Vale of Llangollen*. Was the song a success? It was doubly a success. The blunt and genial aliens applauded him as a breaker of the ice, his compatriots applauded him as a stepper into the breach from which they themselves had hung back. Hardly had he sat down before he was beset with requests to hum the air all over again, in order that they might take it down in the Tonic Sol-fa notation. . . . Then, almost immediately, the clapping swelled again, and there were cries of "Harry! Harry!" Harry Stone, who had the voice of an angel, was allowed to sing as he sat, because of his lameness, and he could not be seen in his dim angle of masonry, but only the unhurrying but unceasing red and white spokes, that strode from afar over the sea, passed overhead, and were off on their wide circle again. Hearing his voice and not seeing him, you thought of a pure spring that gushes suddenly out of the dark and grudging earth.—*Cannibalee*, he sang—

It was poor enough stuff. Its words were a laborious parody, its harmonies exactly predicable; it was facetious or nothing, and it marred an original with a remote and deathly grace of its own; but these things were forgotten as Harry sang. To-morrow they were leaving Llanyglo. To-morrow they were filing back

through that postern that had given them this, their fortnight's respite, from tasks too often ignoble, from cramped circumstances, from savourless lives. And it weighed on them, tenderly yet heavily. Next year seemed so sadly, sadly far away. . . .

*“ Her eyes were as fair as the star of the morn
And her teeth were as sharp as the point of a thorn —
She was very fair to see! —”*

Harry sang; and the hands of young men sought those of young women in the blackness of the Dinas's shadows, and the married ones drew a little closer together, and there was no parody at all in the little soft punctuations of the refrain, in which every voice joined:

*“ She was very fair to see —
(So she was!)
She was very fair to see —
(So she was!) —”*

Edward Garden was right —

*“ Her eyes were as fair as the star of the morn
And her teeth were as sharp as the point of a thorn —
My beautiful Cannibalee —”*

Edward Garden was right. That tender but heavy weight, so tender, so heavy that it bore down the stupid expression of the song, lay even on the Welshmen too. He was admirably shrewd and right. It would not be yet awhile — it was too early yet — but presently, as an advertisement for Llanyglo, an Eisteddfod — an Eisteddfod, say, when the holiday season began in July, and a Brass Band Contest towards its close in September. . . .

They were still singing when they came down again, at eleven o'clock. You might have thought, from the way in which Barry Topham clung to Howell Gruffydd's

arm, that he was slightly drunk, but he was not; that was only brotherliness and exaltation. He still wore the gala-dress of the Grand Chief, but in that particular Howell thought that he had come out of his dilemma rather well. The feather head-dress he had tried on had proved too big for his head, and in trying to shorten the band he had torn off the button, thus rendering the adornment useless. As for the striped blanket about his shoulders — well, it was a coolish night, and there is no sense in taking a chill when there is a blanket to be had to keep you warm. Even Dafydd would see that. So Howell had worn it. . . .

And looked at from below again, the Trwyn beam no longer appeared a hunt of raving red and white monsters, but a little lonely thing, familiar and disregarded, old, wise, minding its own business, and meanwhile quietly opening and shutting an eye.

II

THE GIANT'S STRIDE

AFTER that summer they began in earnest the building of Llanyglo. Come and see them at it.

Whence came these stone-carts and timber-carts, these girders and castings, a single one only taking up a couple of trucks? Whence came these wains of floorboards with their trailing tails bobbing up and down within an inch or two of the white road, these bastions of metal and ballast, these crawling and earth-shaking traction-engines with the little bellies and the monstrous wheels and the dotted line of lorries and trollies behind them? Whence these sawn planks, these massive frames with machinery parts on them so heavy that every rut threatens a standstill, these contractors' vans with absurd little trolley-wheels, these gatlings of drain-pipes, these wagons of plumbers' material, these vans of provisions, this army of men? Why do these now choke the roads that formerly were empty save for the passing of a wain of whispering hay, or the light market-cart that left a smell of raspberries and a stain of Welsh song behind, or Ned Kerr with his folding hut and clogging-knife, or Ynys Lovell with her packing-case cart and her mother with her loops of cane seeking chairs to mend? Where did they come from, and what are they doing here?

The stone, of course, comes from the Porth Neigr quarry, where the blasts shake the rocks and the shoot-

ing of waste resounds throughout the day. And the castings come from Manchester and Middlesborough and Wigan and Leeds. And the sawn planks come from Russia and the Baltic, and the larches for scaffolding from the Merionethshire valleys. These things come from these places — if you look at it that way. But look at it the other way and they have an origin mystical indeed. They are conceived of fecund nods and looks, of the germination of writing and initials and signatures and contract-stamps. They are born of print and promotion and allotment, and the cord is cut when sums are paid on application, and more in three months' time. They thrive when Chairmen, standing up on platforms, say “the adoption of the Accounts has been moved and seconded ——,” and become lusty when more clerks have to be called in, and temporary premises have to be taken, to cope with the public rush for the splendid thing. You see their real origin on those blackboards that seem to set Llanyglo its new multiplication sum, and in those paragraphs in the Manchester and Liverpool and London papers. You see it again when the new Local Government Bill receives the Royal Assent. You see it once more when from the machines of printers in Nottingham and Harrow and Frome and Belfast there are turned out the posters that already overspread the northern hoardings, bidding Blackpool look to itself, warning Douglas that it has another competitor, elbowing Bridlington, shoving Yarmouth aside. There are half a dozen of these posters out already, and if they are not strictly speaking representations of Llanyglo, they are something more — they are prophecies, which you will do well to heed if you want to put your money on a good thing. There is one in Lime Street Station, Liverpool (you need not glance at that upper window; you'd

have a job to find poor Terry Armfield's Trwyn Avenue now). It is the "Welsh Giantess" one. She is dressed in a black steeple hat with a white hood underneath it, red check shawl, striped petticoat, and has buckles on her shoes. She holds the town in a three-quarter circle in her arms, with children at play on the sands and super-Briggsses and super-Laceys all spilling out in the foreground. The mountains are indigo, the hotels pink, the sands chrome yellow, and the name LLANYGLO sprawls across the sky as if the Trwyn Light had dropped it there in passing, a letter at a time. . . . The poster, of course, is a little grandiose: nobody cries stinking fish. The Pier, for example, isn't there yet. But it is somewhere, in somebody's desk-drawer, perhaps, or perhaps it has even got farther than that. Perhaps the caissons are already on the way; certainly a group of strangers has been busy on the shore any time this past twelve months. And the Promenade isn't *ex-act-ly* like that yet. It has railings not unlike those, but not yet that fine stretch of impregnable seawall. And so with the hotels. . . . But all in good time. These things will all be ready quite as soon as those posters have sunk into the perception of the public. We mustn't have a completely equipped town standing empty for a number of seasons while folk make up their minds whether they'll come or not. We have the money, the men, powers under the new Act ample as our hearts could wish, and the certainty of the coming reward.

Llanyglo itself found it difficult to realise what was happening. It all came in such strides. Where the stake-and-wire-enclosed roads had been, a giant hoarding would rise, twenty, forty, fifty yards long. On this hoarding, by means of the railway posters, Llanyglo would be told all about itself — its climate, its mild

winters, its accessibility from all parts, and its "unrivalled attractions." It read Gilbert Smythe's signature there. And among these were other bills curiously opposite, which told them that if they in their turn needed change, there were week-end tickets to be had to Liverpool and Belle Vue at specially reduced rates.— And while Llanyglo knew, as month succeeded month, that work was going on behind these hoardings, the effect was none the less magical when, on the day they were knocked to pieces again, the astounding frontage appeared. They had known nothing like it since that piece of witchcraft of the Kerrs, and now several times they had seen it happen. It had happened between the "Cambrian" and "Cardigan" hotels. It had happened at Pritchard's Corner. And now it was about to happen again, along a line that ran from a point just below the Kerrs' Hafod to the piece of land, not built on yet, where for three days one Spring a circus was set up, its cages and caravans and the guy-ropes of its tenting all mingled with the timber-stacks and mortar-engines and breastworks of stone setts and other dumpings of a dozen different contractors. Later, a temporary wooden shed occupied this space. This shed was town-hall, concert-hall, general purposes hall, and theatre thrown into one. That was the time Llanyglo began to discover that if one of its inhabitants wished to meet another he had better appoint a time and place to do so. To climb up the nearest sandhill and take a look round no longer served.

And even these amazing unfoldings were as nothing compared with that which (it was already known) was to happen next — the construction of the sea-wall and the Pier.

Philip Lacey's Floral Valley was already finished.

Its gravelled walks, with steps every few yards, straggled up both sides of the ravine in the side of the Trwyn, and from the topmost of these you could look down on the octagonal roof of the bandstand that occupied the levelled plot in the middle. Sticking (as it were) the point of his compasses into the bandstand, Philip had described successions of eighth and quarter-circles, with radiating paths and variously shaped smaller beds in between; and of these he had made a piece of crewel-work of colour. Golden feather and London pride, lobelia and pinks and bachelors'-buttons, formed the borders; behind them, in ovals and stars and crown-shapes and monograms, mignonette and arabis and dwarf pansies and Virginia stock were set; and so he had brushed-and-combed and curled and scented the whole place. He had staked his professional reputation, too, that from the first crocus to the last Michaelmas daisy, the gaudy Catherine-wheel would never be for a single day out of bloom; and then he had departed, leaving the responsibility of upkeep to the delighted town. John Willie Garden, looking at the Valley's logical plan, wished that the town itself had had as fair, if severe, a start.

For John Willie was Clerk of the Works now in a very different sense from that in which he had had charge of the coming of Railhead. He was now nineteen, and had no longer any wish to go into the business in Manchester. His father, noting his tastes and capacity, had judged it perfectly safe to depart, leaving John Willie to look after things in his stead; and as no contractor's foreman wished to quarrel with the son of the principal maker of the place, he had a fairly large authority. So John Willie occupied the house by the shore, with Minetta to make him comfortable. He

spent his days in passing from this building to that, pushing at doors in hoardings marked "No Admittance," threading his way along the wheeling-planks, mounting ladders, looking down on the swarming men from the stagings, looking up through the groves of the scaffold-poles, looking out, not over the sandhills now, but over other houses built and building. The masts and spars of other scaffold-poles here and there might almost have made you think that a navigable river twisted through Llanyglo, and that these were the rigging of the vessels upon it. From one work to another he passed, approving, questioning, telephoning, making notes. There is scarce a room of that period of Llanyglo's up-springing but, even to-day, John Willie Garden can tell you the lie of its water-pipes, where its main-cocks are, where its drains, its gas-connections, the depth of its foundations, the branchings of its chimney-flues. He hasn't been into half of them since, but the present occupiers can tell him nothing about which cellars are on the rock and when the girders are due to be repainted. And he could talk to the men as well as to their bosses. He addressed them authoritatively, but he knew their football and their drinking, their jokes and songs, which dog belonged to which and which among them "subbed" or "liened" before his wage was due. John Willie Garden's boyhood lay behind him now.

What was John Willie like to look at by this time, and what was his outlook on the world?

You may meet his kind at six o'clock any morning, the sons of Alderman This or Sir John That, going to their fathers' engineering-shops in Leeds, or to Manchester spinning-sheds, or Rochdale factories, or dye-works, or rolling-mills, or drawing-offices, or electrical works. They wear greasy blue overalls and carry tin

luncheon-cans, and use cotton-waste for handkerchiefs. They glory in the readiness of their repartee to their fathers' workmen, to be mistaken for one of whom gives them the keenest pleasure. Joyously they attack the blackest and greasiest of the work, honestly forgetting that they could leave this to others if they wished. — But see them in the evening! They have had tea and a "clean-up" by this time. Their heads have been soused and their hands pumiced, they have on their mahogany boots and their white collars, the hands that wielded crowbars or strained with the grip of spanners ply thin and expensive canes now, and you can see the radiance of their approach a quarter of a mile away. They are off to billiard-rooms and card-parties, theatre-boxes, or courting. They will be home fairly early, because of the five-o'clock alarum in the morning, but until then they are so evidently about to enjoy themselves that you sigh if you are unable to join them. Go one night and watch them when next the Pantomime comes. Sit in the second row of the stalls (you won't be able to get into the first row). If the leading lady is pretty, and John Willie and Percy Briggs are there, you won't consider your evening wasted. The show is sure to "go."

That, more or less, was John Willie. He had rather a lot of money to spend, but nowhere much to spend it yet. His hair was a little less primrose coloured than it had been (pomatum does darken hair a little), but his eyes had not altered. They were still just as receptive or just as stupid as he cared to make them, blue as flax, and capable, if you happened to catch him at something he did not wish to be caught at, of a rather hard and prolonged stare. He was not tall — long ago it had been plain he would not be — but, looking at his

shoulders, hung as it were from an apex at the back of his head, you would have wondered at the lightness of the pit-pat of his feet when he did a step-dance on the occasion of one of the men's "birthdays" (which have nothing to do with days of birth, by the way, but frequently much to do with an unfancied horse and a long-ish price). In a word, he was a nicish, powerful young rascal, with an expensive dressing-case and a trace of those Lancashire final "g's"; and he and his friends (of whom he had a good many down to Llanyglo) had their own corner in the "Cambrian" lounge, unless the evening's programme included cards or involved the use of a room with a piano in it.

Yet, though the Llanyglo air might thrill with the clink-clink of chisels on stone, and vibrate with the jolting of the builders' carts, and resound with all the noises of the swift building, still, nobody who now came thought it ruined. On the contrary, exactly as the Briggses and the Laceys had predicted, it came to them with shocks of delight. For think of it: here was no twopenny ride on a clanging tram through naked, unshaded streets before they could reach the sea. Here was no two-miles plod back again over the burning asphalt, slackening every nerve that had been braced up by the bathe. Here was no Brighton nor Scarborough nor Blackpool yet, with nettings of electric wires overhead and perspective of rails below. No: from any part of the place, three minutes would take you, if not in every case to the beach itself, at any rate to an open space of thyme and harebells and hillocks of clean sand, where, if you got on the right side of the sandhill, you might not know that there was a crane or a scaffold within miles. And if the beach was ploughed

and harrowed and tramped and trodden until it resembled a dirty batter-pudding, half a day and a tide, and the sands were smooth and shining again, and the wet stretches seemed as much sky as land, and passing birds were reflected in their depths. The sea tidied up the shore again as the housemaids took up the crumbs from the hotel carpets.— And there were dozens of boats now, in which you could push out a few hundred yards and find yourself in spots that man can never sully. Five minutes' tugging at the oars and you could rock and gaze up at the sky, or look over the boat's side at the translucent green reflection of its curving boards below, and past that into glassy clear depths, and so past that again to where the water began to show you, not its depths, but the broken mirroring of the sky again. The boating was one of the "unrivalled attractions." By nine o'clock every morning a row of boatmen leaned against the railings between the "Cambrian" and the jetty, smoking, scanning the front, showing you fresh bait, and offering boats by the hour, the morning, or the day. Foremost among them, as likely as not, would be Tommy, the youngest of the Kerrs. He wore a blue gausey with a diamond woven across the breast, touched the peak of his dirty old petty-officer's cap constantly, and told folk it was "a gradely morning for fishing." Though the youngest, he was the least reputable of the Kerrs. Ned, the eldest, Llanyglo counted part of itself; the two middle ones were both contractors' foremen, and respected citizens; but Tommy had become the scandal of Llanyglo. You were well advised to allow him double time or more if you gave him a bag to carry anywhere and there was the temptation of beer on the way; and you might catch

him sober if you engaged him and his boat soon after breakfast, but your chance of doing so became ever less as the day wore on.

Who were these people who strolled among the droning bees of the sandhills or pushed out from the shore in boats? Well, they were of more kinds than one or two now. The charges at the "Cambrian" were still stiffish; a week there cost as much as a fortnight at the "Cardigan," or a month at the "Montgomery"; and so we still exhibit the social degrees. There has even been a certain amount of "feeling" about this. Of two Rochdale men, say, with little to choose between them in point of income, one will be seen on the "Cambrian's" balcony in the evening after dinner, his heart-shaped dinner-shirt one of a number of heart-shaped dinner-shirts, the bosom and neck and head of the lady he is chatting with rising out of her lacy corsage as a bouquet rises from the paper frill that encloses and bedecks it. He will be seen there, with the red-shaded lamps of the empty dining-room behind him and the moonlight making his sunburnt face very dark. But the other's face is sunburnt too, and at half the cost. He too could attitudinise like this were he so minded. And he reflects that Jones or Jackson may cut a dash among strangers, but he mustn't try it on with people who know him at home. As for himself, he's thankful to say that he's just the same wherever he is, at home or away on a holiday. . . .

In fact Jones or Jackson is precisely the man Edward Garden more than half expected — the man who can't quite afford it, but will. . . . But this, it is hardly necessary to observe, is to take the "Cambrian" at less than its average and the "Cardigan" at rather more.

The "Montgomery" is actually outclassed by the better "Private Hotels" and one or two of the superior "Boarding Establishments." Indeed, of these last the "Cadwallader" almost ranks with the "Cambrian" itself. And so we come by degrees down to Ham-and-Egg Terrace.—But enough of these *nuances* of difference of a fortnight's duration. Who, taken by-and-large, are these people, and where do they come from?

You have only to ask yourself, "Who else should they be?" and your question is half answered. Remember the smallness of these Islands, and the scores of pulsing, radiating, almost radio-active centres within them, every one swarming with folk who intend to have a better time than their fathers have had. Could the East Coast be pushed out beyond the North Sea, and Lancashire be stretched until it took in Galway, St. George's Channel and all, there might be room enough on England's shores for every parliamentary voter to have a few acres of Trwyn foreshore of his own and a black cow walking up and down them, seeking coolness and food hock-deep in the glistening ebb; but, as things are, the littoral is by much too small. True, scores and fifties of miles of it remain practically unvisited; but no snail has snuffled out its manganese there, and they are not within a few hours and a thirty-shilling circular fare of the human ant-heaps of the land, where King's Ransoms of Holiday Club money are put by. There was no wonder about the growth of Llanyglo. Geographically situated as it was, the marvel would have been had it not grown. With a few posters and similar devices to advertise it, it would presently continue to advertise itself.

Therefore the folk who flocked there were of every kind, short of the grey and overwhelming multitude itself.

Because it was only partly built, *because* it had not yet shaken down to a definite character and physiognomy and personality, it spread its net the wider. Did you want to dress for dinner, and to have your luggage carried by a man in a red jacket? There was the "Cambrian." Did you want everything that the Cambrians had, barring only the luxury of being seen lounging in one of the wicker-chairs about its portals, and still to keep your money in your pocket? There was the "Cardigan." Did you want to read or to idle, to botanise or merely to forget your cares for a fortnight, to picnic up the Trwyn or to have your meals in bed? They asked no questions at the "Montgomery." From Philip Lacey's piece of Floral Geometry to the nooks on the farther side of the Trwyn where you could spend a whole morning undisturbed, there was something for every taste. And they actually had to turn people away who had been so ill-advised as to come with their luggage without having first secured their lodging.

And now it had come to this: that while these came to Llanyglo for a change of air, John Willie Garden, who spent his days among lime and mortar and wheeling-planks and newly dressed stone, frequently turned his back on Llanyglo for precisely the same reason. Once a week or so he was seen to drive past Pritchard's Corner in a light yellow trap at nine o'clock in the morning. He was off to see to another of his father's interests — that "catchment area" far away up in the mountains. He drove eight miles, put up at an inn past which a trout-stream brawled (hardly yet settled from its precipitous plunging cataracts), and then set out on foot up a road that rose one-in-five under a whispering wood, to see the skyline of which you had to throw your head back. It took him an hour of walking to get to his desti-

nation — a solitary wooden cabin where the agent lived. The agent had on the whole an easy time of it, for hardly a hundred yards from his cabin door, above the woods now, lay Llyn Delyn, pure looking-glass in the mile long crook of the mountain. An old boat was moored among the sedges at one end, the launching of which on the unbroken surface of that lovely water always seemed to invoke vague judgments, penalties perhaps forborne, but none the less incurred. Here the agent, whose name was Sharpe, fished. John Willie fished with him. Fishing was a good enough way of passing the time, for they were not really doing anything up there. They were merely waiting — waiting for more people to come to Llanyglo, for the Town Hall to rise, for the seat of local administration to be shifted from Porth Neigr, and then for the Waterworks Scheme. They had the water as fast as prevision and Law could make it. They would not drive too hard a bargain with the town. In the meantime they fished, speaking little, noting whether it was the gnat or the cochybondhu that killed, casting so lightly that the boat scarcely rocked. Sometimes, when the amber evening light was clear behind them, so impeccable was the profound mirror below that, while their tweed-clad forms could hardly be distinguished from the hues of the mountain behind, the upside-down shapes beneath them were sharp and dark as the silhouettes in your grandmother's little oval frames.

III

THE BLANK CHEQUE

DEATH took a hand that winter in Llanyglo's making. They were getting well up with the Town Hall, in what is now Gardd Street; still the flag floated at the polehead, in token that they had got thus far without serious mishap; and then it had to be run down to the half-mast. It was a common scaffold accident. Harry Kerr, on one of the upper stages, stepped back upon empty air; Sam sprang forward to save him; and they picked them both up from among the debris below. A few remembered the launching of that open boat on that wild night seven years before, and said that it seemed out of nature that these comparatively young men should go off before ancient Mrs. Pritchard; and Mrs. Pritchard herself baa-ed, and said that there would be more room now in the Hafod Unos whatever. But most of the residents were new-comers now, who knew more of Tommy Kerr's present delinquencies than of the history of his brothers, and they could hardly be expected to grieve. They buried them both at Sarn, under the shadow of that pepper-caster of a fifteenth-century church tower, and the problem of however the Hafod had held them all became a thing of the past.

The Town Hall was the outward and visible sign that Llanyglo had not only caught up with Porth Neigr, but had outstripped it. It had special conveniences for a centre of administration, which it forthwith became;

and at the election that Autumn Howell Gruffydd was made a Councillor. He had two branch shops now, one at Porth Neigr and the other at Sarn, and to his newspaper counter he had added a Library of books bought at Mudies' clearance sales. He charged fourpence a week for the loan of each book, which was twopence more than the old stationer's library at Porth Neigr had charged; but there was the railway-fare to take into account if you considered the charge extortionate. Later, a good deal later, when the picture postcard was invented, Howell did rather well out of that too. He praised your amateur snapshot of the Trwyn or the Promenade of the façade of the Town Hall, and made you what no doubt seemed to him a fair offer; namely to give you a dozen prints in exchange for your film. He then proceeded to fill a revolving stand with other prints, which he sold at seven for sixpence, or, highly glazed, at twopence apiece. With pennies and twopences accumulated in this and similar ways he bought certain house-property behind Ham-and Egg Terrace, paying a ground-rent to Edward Garden. He had by this time acquired a little personal habit of Mr. Tudor Williams's — the habit of shaking hands with one hand, while the other affectionately kneaded and patted his interlocutor's right arm from the wrist up to the shoulder.

Hitherto the developments of Llanyglo had lain in a few hands only — the hands of Edward Garden and his shareholders, of one or two others who had forgotten they had a holding in Terry Armfield's Thelema, but remember it now with joy and thanksgiving, of Mr. Tudor Williams, and of not very many more. But now a more ponderous machine began to rumble into motion. This was the machine of which the Railway Companies

and a couple of Pleasure Packet Services were the visible active parts. Rumours now began to fly about of developments long since planned and now imminent, developments astounding and gigantic. These rumours began with hotels. Hitherto the "Cambrian" had been thought to be rather more than so-so, but of course nobody would have dreamed of comparing it with the "Grands" and "Majestics" which "*Lancashire Hotels, Limited*" possessed in the great centres of the North. These had half a dozen tennis-courts in front, palm-courts and winter-gardens behind, and five and six and seven hundred bedrooms. But now the rumour ran that, not one of these, but two, owned by opposing Syndicates, were to be set up in Llanyglo. The sites on which they were to be built varied according to the version of the tale. Some said that the "Montgomery" was to be pulled down again, some that the whole row of fishermen's cottages was to be demolished, some that a terrace was to be dug out of the side of the Trwyn itself and a funicular railway constructed. However it might be, it was known that there were prolonged meetings of the Council about it, and that at one point the whole thing, whatever it might be, seemed likely to fall through. And that, as they now knew, would be their death-blow. They would do anything, anything rather than that these immense reservoirs of capital, already partly opened, should be shut up again. They would hold out the town itself as security, a twopenny rate, promises, accommodations, anything. It was said that Sheard, the Porth Neigr solicitor, who had moved to new premises opposite the Llanyglo Town Hall, sat up five nights in the week, making actuarial calculations, estimating yields, measuring margins, and balancing all with the possibility of the town's bankruptcy. Edward Garden was once more

at Llanyglo, and closeted frequently with Mr. Tudor Williams and Howell Gruffydd. . . . Even the two projected hotels were not much more than a detail as matters now stood; the whole town must now be given a tremendous upward heave or collapse with a crash. Even those hotels could go up now only on one condition — namely, that the base of the visiting population, that foundation of which innumerable units are the strength, should at once be immensely broadened. For every individual who could afford to put up at a palace, they must rake in scores, hundreds of people who could not. The real foundation of the hotels must be row on row, acre on acre, of Ham-and-Egg Terraces. For the rest, a place that must live through the year on the takings of three months must be big, as those places of entertainment must be big that are full on Saturdays only and empty during the rest of the week. Nothing smaller would tempt the Railway Companies. (This, by the way, was not altogether good news for Raymond Briggs. Architecture is not needed for that broadened base. Any working master-builder can run up houses that are good enough. The pattern of one is the pattern of all, and Raymond would have small chance in competition with the bigger men of his profession.)

Nor would it suffice merely to house and feed the people who came. Other watering-places were awake to the new menace now, so that the rival announcements on the hoardings resembled a desperate grapple for the possession of those sixpences and shillings and half-crowns that were poured without ceasing into the coffers of the Holiday Clubs. Not one in five hundred of those who contributed those shillings and half-crowns stopped to think that Wales herself has no Holiday Clubs — that Wales does not go abroad with a year's savings

in her pocket of which it is black shame to bring as much as a single penny back again. They wanted amusement. The Resort or Spa that could provide the most amusement would get the lion's share. Amusements were a more urgent necessity than chairs and tables and roofs.

So it was that, between this place and that, the people who intended to have a better time than their fathers had had were in some danger of being pampered.

The project for the Llanyglo Big Wheel was set a-going.

The promise that Howell Gruffydd had made behind his hand to John Pritchard had already begun to be redeemed. The Town Hall was not three months old before a Grand Bazaar was held there in aid of the Llanyglo Joint Chapels. On the first of the four days during which the Bazaar lasted the proceedings were opened by Tudor Williams, Esquire, M.P. On the second day they were opened by Edward Garden, Esquire. On the third Mrs. Howell Gruffydd opened them, in heliotrope satin; and on the fourth day Raymond Briggs, Esquire, who scented Chapel-building in the air, performed the ceremony. Raymond guessed that at least three new Chapels were certain presently to go up in the stead of those buildings of tin and boards and sickly blue paint that had so outraged Terry Armfield's Oxford Movement susceptibilities. As a matter of fact, five went up, and have debts on them to this day, in spite of the long series of Bazaars, two a season at least, at which the Saxon veins were opened. . . . For the money poured in. It rained into the square collecting-sheets that were placed at intervals along all the principal streets. It clattered into the slots of the wooden boxes that were rattled under the nose of the passer-by. It was minted in the Bran Tubs from which,

paying your threepence, you drew forth a penny toy. It multiplied with every flower Miss Nancy Pritchard, with twenty other young women in Welsh national costume, sold. It made heavy the pockets of the stallholders, who had never any change. It made little cylinders of silver and copper, three and four and five inches high, on the tables folk had to pass before they were admitted to the Concerts. . . . Believe it, the Chapel-goers of Llanyglo, seeing all that money to be had for little more than the asking, opened their eyes, and sat up, and took notice. If *this* was the Saxon invasion, why had they not welcomed it long ago? A few bales of hired bunting, a few pounds for evergreens and velvet banners with texts on them, a few paid assistants and a not unreasonable printers' bill, and — *these* splendid results!

As big as John Pritchard himself said, putting on his spectacles to see whether the astonishing total could really be true, "They must be very rit-ss, whatever!"

But the Bazaars had not this golden harvest to themselves. They found competition, which they a little resented. Secular amusements more than held their own. Gigantic castings had begun to arrive for the Big Wheel; under the booth-awnings of Gardd Street (recently christened) penny articles could be had for a penny; and a long row of automatic machines — Wheels of Fortune, little iron men who kicked footballs, Sibyls of Fate and Try-your-Grip machines — had sprung up along the railings of the sea-front. A few stage-gipsies with green parrakeets had made the town their summer home. There was a rifle-range on the farther sandhills — you could hear the "plunk" of the bullets on the iron targets. Near it was a travelling Merry-go-Round. Photographers had their "pitches"

on the sands, with humourous canvas flats with oval holes in them, through which you put your face, so that you could have your portrait taken as "*He Won't be Happy till He Gets It*" or in the act of embracing a two-dimensional young woman, whichever was to your liking. And there were niggers. These danced and sang and played the banjo on a raised platform, dressed in wide turned-down schoolboy collars and pink striped trousers; the concentric rings of green chairs about them resembled the spread of a large symmetrical thistle plant; and outside this ring one or other of the troupe constantly moved, shaking a sort of jellybag under your nose (as the Chapel-goers had shaken the collecting-boxes) and blinking the pink lids in his burnt-cork face. A little farther on was the men's bathing-place. They had wooden machines now, into which youths entered four at a time — no more the trim and private striped tents of the Laceys and the Raymond Briggses. The ladies' bathing-place was farther on still — a boat stood off between the two lest the sexes should not keep their distance. And a hundred yards past that, beyond a great scabrous groyne of loose stone, clay-coloured at the shore end but slimy with green as it ran down to the sea, with red flags and notice-boards along the top and a moveable rope-barrier at its base where two men walked on sentry-go, they were at work upon the Pier.

By this time there was one question which, more than others, was beginning to disturb Llanyglo. This was the question of drink. In the old days, when the old brown horse who had walked as carefully as if he had had a spirit-level inside him had first brought the Gardens and their luggage so softly over the sandhills, there had been no inn nearer than Porth Neigr. Save

on market-days, scarce a drop of alcohol passed a Llanyglo man's lips from year's end to year's end. If John Pritchard had preached occasionally against drunkenness, it had been conventionally only, with little more bearing on Llanyglo's own habits than if he had preached against cannibalism. Then Railhead had crawled across the land; Howell Gruffydd had found it necessary to warn the young against contamination; and with the building of the "Cambrian" had come Llanyglo's first licence.

But for long enough after that there had been no public-houses. The travelling army of labourers had had their own canteens, and even when a necessary beer-licence or two had been applied for at Sessions, the applications had been granted as it were behind the hand, and the affair had been got over as quickly as possible. No: Tommy Kerr's unconscious soft carolling of *Glan Meddwdod Mwyn* as he had crossed the sandhills on that torrid Sunday afternoon had held no real personal reproach for Llanyglo. For Porth Neigr, perhaps yes; for other places, yes; but not for Llanyglo.

But since then things had changed. Things had changed since they had been able to tell themselves that what went on in the "Cambrian" lounge was no concern of theirs. They had begun to change when Llanyglo had been no longer able to shut its eyes to the beer-drinking of the navvies and bricklayers and the brothers Kerr. Then for a time a convenient connection had been established between drunkenness and rough trousers tied about the knees with string. For cases such as these, the little Station at the extreme end of Gardd Street, with "Police" over the door and geraniums in the windows, had ample powers. The half-dozen constables must exercise discretion, that was all.

But it became a not uncommon sight to see a tipsy reveller singing himself unsteadily home on one side of the street, while the officer, watching him from the other side, stood questioning his discretion until the delinquent had passed out of sight. For a time Tommy Kerr, who had been twice run in, had served as a scape-goat, but that was little permanent help. It began to be seen that the real problem was, that if they would get folk with money to spend into the town, they must accept these folk, within reason, as they were, tipplers and teetotalers alike. For some reason or other, convivial drinking also seemed to come under the head of amusements. Blackpool provided liquor; Douglas was in an exceptional position for the provision of liquor; and more and more it appeared that Llanyglo must open the Bazaar doors with one hand and the doors of inns and taverns with the other.

Meanwhile, the "Lancashire Rose," on one side of Gardd Street, and the "Trafford" on the other, were quickly becoming notorious. These were both fully licenced houses, with Tap and Saloon entrances, and it was idle to pretend to think that all the scandal originated in the humbler compartments. Heady young men with full pockets, respectable fathers of families, and others whom they could by no means lock up as they could lock up Tommy Kerr, went into these places in broad daylight, sometimes coming out again obviously affected: and it was almost certain that not all their stomachs were so innocent and unaccustomed that a single glass of the poison had produced this result. Dolefully they wished that a sober Lancashire would come to Llanyglo; but — a Lancashire of some sort they *must* have. Why else were they doing all they could

to win its favour? What else was their Big Wheel for, of which four mammoth standards of plate and lattice-girder had already risen thirty feet above the sandhills, where they were stepped and anchored into the oldest rocks of earth? Why else were they toiling day and night at their Pier, and at the building, section by section, of the sea-wall? Why else were they setting up gasometers beyond Pritchard's, and discussing a Sewage Scheme, and — most urgent of all — gnawing their fingers anxiously until some arrangement should be come to with Edward Garden's lawyers about that water far away up Delyn? The supply was becoming terrifyingly insufficient. For want of mere water the growth of the town might come to a stop as plants shrivel and fall again in an arid bed. . . . And, save to get Lancashire folk there, drunk or sober, why did they solemnly discuss this inanity of an amusement or that — Big Wheels and Switchbacks, Scenic Railways, Toboggan Slides, Panoramas, Fat Women, Dancing Halls, Floral Valleys and Concerts and Town Bands? There was no going back now. They had spent money that they would never, never see again if they persisted in being visionaries in business and irreconcilables on mere minor points of demeanour. . . .

"They spend more when they are . . . like that," said Howell Gruffydd one day to the Council assembled. He said it a little shamefacedly, his fingers fiddling with the green cloth of the Council-table.

Nobody spoke.

"I — saw — a — man," Howell continued, "a respectable man, with good clothes on his back and a new hat, all spoiled — it was a pity to see it — I saw him knock over row of bot-tles at John Parry's in Gardd

Street, just for amusement, and he laugh, and say ‘How mut-ss?’ like it wass noth-thing, he was so-a drunk ——”

“It is a pit-ty they make such a noise sometimes,” somebody said, in a curiously aggrieved voice. . . .

Evan Pugh, the landlord of the “Trafford,” was of precisely the same opinion.

They escaped their dilemma by means of a noteworthy bit of government by minority. There was a small section of the Council, easily outvotable at ordinary times, which urged that, after all, things were *as they were*, that you must live and let live in this world, and that even good things could be pushed to extremes when they became no longer good. And, as these began to speak, one stern bazaar-promoter after another began to look at his watch and to mutter “Dear me — I had no idea it wass so late — indeed I not catss him if I not go now ——”

They left.

This, or else a tactful absenteeism, became their custom whenever licencing matters came up to be discussed.

But cases of conscience are cases of conscience all the world over.

The sum that Edward Garden proposed as a fair price for that catchment-area up Delyn was two hundred thousand pounds — this for about two thousand acres; and on the day when his lawyers named the figure it was a wonder that the whole Council did not take in a body to their beds. Two hundred thousand pounds! They could not believe their ears. Nor could they believe their eyes either when they got it in writing, words first, and the figures in brackets afterwards. If they had written the single word “*Fancy!*” across that document and sent it straightway back to the lawyers they

would no doubt have followed their first impulse; but somebody, less hard hit in the wind than the rest, managed to gasp out the proposal that they should sleep on it, and sleep on it they did. But the night did not alter it. In the morning it was still two hundred thousand pounds (£200,000).

News of the rapacity of the demand had leaked out almost immediately. Ordinarily, anybody who had stopped Howell Gruffydd in the street and had asked him a Council secret would have been met with the smiling face he deserved, but this was extraordinary altogether. On the morning after they had slept on it, William Morgan saw Howell on the Promenade, came up to him, and, making no bones about it whatever, asked him whether it was true.

“Who told you, William Morgan?” Howell began . . . but he really had not the heart to go on. He took off his hat, wiped the lining of it with his handkerchief, and the bright sunlight showed his brows lined with anxiety and sick fear, crumpled and embossed like one of his own pats of butter. He replaced his hat and blew his nose violently.

“Is it true?” demanded William Morgan again.

Howell became grim.—“It was an e-vil day for this town when that man came here,” he said, forgetting how little town there had been when that old brown horse had first brought the Gardens softly jolting across the sandhills.

“Then it is true?” said William Morgan once again.

“It is true that a man sometimes asks one thing, and finiss by getting something very diff-ferent from what he ask,” Howell replied, and walked abruptly away.

He crossed the Promenade and turned into Pontnewydd Street. There he stood, irresolutely plucking

his lip and gazing into a stationer's window. Dafydd Dafis's voice in his ear caused him to start almost violently.

"H-what is this, Howell Gruffydd?" Dafydd demanded without preface, his eyes burningly and truculently on the Chairman's face. He wore his everyday corduroys, but his air was that of a monarch in banishment. Howell turned.

"Ah, how are you, Dafydd? Indeed you look well! They do say the smell of road-tar is a very healthy smell ——"

"H-what is this we hear, Howell Gruffydd?" Dafydd repeated.

Howell tried to smile.—"Indeed, how can I answer a question like that, 'What is this we hear?' ——"

"H-what is this about Delyn and the Water?"

There was a dangerous quickness in Dafydd's voice. Involuntarily Howell gave a little hiccough of emotion, which answered Dafydd sufficiently. His eyes were like the windows of a burning house.

"He sell us two thousand acres, of our own land, for how mut-ss?"

"Two — hundred — thou-sand — pounds," sobbed Howell.

"Of our own mountains — Delyn, that belong to us — he sell us Delyn, this Saxon? ——"

"Indeed, indeed, Dafydd, do not excite yourself — it will have to go to arbi-tra-tion ——"

"It will go to Hell, with his soul!" Dafydd replied fiercely. "He sell us Delyn — he sell us Delyn water — he sell us our own moun-tains! — It iss not for this we make you Chairman of the Council, Howell Gruffydd!"

Howell trembled, but put up a soothing hand.

“Aw-w-w, you wait and see, Dafydd Dafis! A prof-fit is a prof-fit, but this is wick-ed, and preposterous, and out of all reason! You wait and see! We have a meeting this morning, and p’rapss we show Mister Edward Garden he is not so clever as he think he is! He think he put his Saxon pistol to our heads like this? Indeed he make a great mistake! You wait and see, Dafydd. There iss a saying, ‘He laughs best who laughs last’—you wait and see!” He patted Dafydd’s shoulder and arm reassuringly, and perhaps felt heartened by his own words. “You wait and see!” he said once more, almost cheerily now. “We not pay it—never fear! I see you later——”

And he hurried away, leaving Dafydd standing on the pavement.

But the Council Meeting that morning settled nothing, and neither did the next Meeting nor the next after that. They wrote to Mr. Tudor Williams, but it almost looked as if Mr. Tudor Williams was taking a leaf out of their own book: if they had pressing private affairs when questions of ales and wines and spirits appeared on the agenda, so Mr. Tudor Williams pleaded a multiplicity of urgent engagements now that it was a question of water. The meeting adjourned, reassembled, adjourned again, and met again. Days passed, weeks passed. Legal opinions were taken, but no action. They fetched Mr. Tudor Williams down almost by force, and he proffered his good offices, but deprecated the serving of notices of compulsory arbitration. He advised an amicable settlement if one could possibly be arrived at. Llanyglo’s anger died away, and blank despair began to take its place.

Then one day Edward Garden’s lawyers hinted that in the event of an arrangement being come to within

a given time they were in a position to enter into certain pledges on behalf of the Railway Companies. They hinted also that they were equally in a position to do the other thing. Surely, they said, Llanyglo saw that this was a matter of its life or its death; and surely, they added, it was plain that it would not really be *they* who were paying! Nothing of the sort! Lancashire would pay. Yorkshire would pay. The Midlands would help to pay, and perhaps also the West and South. Whoever footed his bill at hotel or boarding-establishment would be contributing — they must see that he did contribute — his portion. What though visitors grumbled and talked about extortion? They forgot all about it the next day. What though residents groaned under the burden of the rates? They must submit to conditions, like everybody else. Llanyglo must pay, and pass it on.

In short, all the people who intended to have a better time than their fathers had had were to be shaven and shorn exactly as their fathers had been.

Llanyglo saw it, sighed, and acquiesced. There was nothing else to do.

And if Parry, of the "Lancashire Rose," or Pugh, of the "Trafford," reaped too rich a harvest by making people drunk, they must be assessed higher and higher still, and still higher, that was all.

IV

PAWB

THIS question of assessment had already raised another question, which at first seemed a small one, but swelled afterwards into ominous proportions. When the rumours of those two towering new hotels had first begun to circulate, it had been a gentle and stimulating mental exercise to place, in fancy, these palaces on this spot or that. Among other suggestions, the vacant plot of land adjacent to the Kerrs' Hafod Unos had been mentioned as a fitting site for one of them. Hereupon folk had begun to ask one another: What about the Kerrs' title?

Hitherto they had not thought of this. The four brothers had planted themselves there when all about had been a waste of sand, had since taken firm root, and there two of them still remained. But between such a squatting eight or nine years ago, and a sitting tight now that everything had gone up a hundredfold in value, was an immense difference. To this difference, moreover, was now added the evil repute in which Tommy Kerr lived. Ned, the alder-cutter, they would have accepted; they could live with Ned; but his brother, besides being in his unpleasant person a public nuisance, was beginning to appear a setter-back of the fingers of History's clock, a mongrel in their fine new manger, a thorn in the side of that lusty young Welsh Giantess whose figure was now one of the familiar

sights on a thousand hoardings in the North. The invisible odour of stale beer-fumes in which he moved poisoned the air of the Promenade, and, though he certainly did his best to remedy this as far as the staleness was concerned (invariably beginning the day with pints and ending it with quarts), that did not improve matters in the long run.

As long as Tommy Kerr was merely locked up once in a while for drunkenness, he himself paid no heed to the whispers that had begun to gather about him. He could sleep as heavily and happily in a cell as in his own Hafod. Nor were his eyes at once opened even when an inspector appeared at the Hafod and began to ask questions about its sanitation — which, by the way, was of a low order. But his brother Ned began to “study,” as he called it, and the result of his studying was that he said one day to Tommy, “They’ll be wanting to be shut o’ you and me, Tommy.”

Tommy was in the act of wiping out a greasy frying-pan with a piece of old newspaper. He stopped suddenly. After a pause, “Eh?” he said. . . . “D’ye mean purr us out?”

“We’re a bit i’ t’ road to my way o’ thinking,” Ned replied, sinking back into his arm-chair again and closing his eyes.

He had taken badly to heart the deaths of his brothers Harry and Sam; indeed he had not been the same man since. He frequently walked over to Sarn churchyard, sat on a flat tombstone near his brothers’ grave, and smoked and spat; he was “studying” about a stone for them. Intermittently he talked about carving this with his own hands, but he delayed to do so. All the work he now did was to doze in a street-watchman’s hut, with a two-days-old newspaper on his knee

and a firebasket in front of him set sideways on the wind. He was no longer the beer-drinker he had been. "Think ye?" said Tommy, after another silence. "But we donnot want to be purred out," he added resuming the wiping of the frying-pan, though more slowly.

And as it seemed to be a condition of their remaining in their Hafod unmolested that they should make a show of satisfying the sanitary inspector's demands, they overhauled their drainage system and gave it the minimum of attention it demanded.

Then one day an offer was made them, which was also an admission. It was an offer of compensation and of another dwelling elsewhere, and the admission apparently was that their title was a good one. Ned was for accepting the offer, and accepted it would probably have been but for a circumstance that Tommy discovered only in a roundabout way. He was congratulated one morning in the "Marine" Tap on having escaped ejection. This was the first he had heard of ejection. He asked a few questions, and soon after went out for a walk.

Ejection! Apparently they had been considering his ejection, had found it for some reason or other not to be feasible, and had substituted the offer of compensation. . . .

Then, while this offer was still neither accepted nor rejected, something else came to Tommy Kerr's ears. This was that the sites, not of one, but of both the new hotels, were at last decided on. As a matter of fact, this choice was now almost a foregone conclusion. Next to Gardd Street, which ran parallel with the shore, Pontnewydd Street, in which lay the Hafod, was becoming the principal street of the town. It ran from the shore to Pritchard's Corner, was prolonged past that to the

new station, and was the main thoroughfare for landaus and wagonettes off to the mountains. The hotels were to be built one on either side of the Hafod, not actually adjoining it, but not more than a couple of strides away.

Already in Tommy Kerr's suspicious mind the mischief was done. Howell Gruffydd, all blandishments to his face, had been making secret inquiries behind his back, had he? He had been talking about compensation and whispering with attorneys and such-like, had he? Very well. That settled it. Tommy would go when he was purred out, and not before. As for that snuffing Howell Gruffydd. . . .

"So that's it, Mister Treacle-Tongue, is it?" he had muttered. "Reight. As long as we know where we are. I'm off out to buy a ha'porth o' thread ——"

And with the ha'porth of thread he had sewn a large button on each of his pocket-flaps, and thenceforward meeting Howell Gruffydd in the street, had ostentatiously buttoned every pocket up before answering the prosperous grocer's smiling "Good morning."

They began to dig the foundations of those glittering hotels.

They did so, as it happened, in the early part of that same summer that saw Edward Garden's ingenious advertisements put into execution — the summer of the Eisteddfod and the Brass Band Contest. Llanyglo was packed with people. Two days before the Eisteddfod, there began to troop into the town from all parts bards and singers, poets and harpers and minstrels and the members of a chorus five hundred voices strong. They came in their everyday clothes, moustached like vikings, bearded and maned like lions, and instantly with their coming the Saxon took a back seat. Shopkeepers left their counters, publicans clapped down the half-filled

glasses, and ran to their doors as this honoured singer or that famous bard passed their windows. They walked with stately slow walk and stately slow head-turnings, and happy was the Welshman who got a motion of the hand or a benign smile from them. The Gorsedd had been publicly proclaimed; the temporary dancing hall behind Gardd Street, big enough for a regiment to drill in, had been made ready; the insignia in the Town Hall were as jealously watched and guarded as are the Crown Jewels in the Tower of London; and he was a prudent visitor who had realised that for three whole days he was likely to get but negligent attention from those who at other times were his humble servitors. For, fier as aliens would, this was the Awakening of the Red Dragon. Their reproach that he was but a pasteboard Dragon fell to the ground. The Dragon was what the Dragon was, and if his service was theatrical, theatricalism is ennobled when its boards are the soil itself and each of its actors an Antæus, strong because his foot is upon the ground that bred him. In England, behind his smile, the Welshman is an enigma of reserve; but see him at his Eisteddfod, with money waiting to be taken at his closed shop-doors. . . .

With the ceremony of the Gorsedd on the opening day Dafydd Dafis's spellbound and uplifted hours began. At the sounding of the trumpets his head flew proudly up; at the Drawing of the Sword and the solemn question, "Is there Peace in the land?" his voice joined in the reply, like a thunder-clap, "There is Peace"—for that was before the year when, for three whole days, the blade remained naked and bright, while far over the seas brave Englishmen and brave Welshmen fell and died together. It was the single victory of Dafydd's life. On ordinary days he now drove a road-engine — Howell

Gruffydd had got him the job under the Council; but he was a Lord of Song now. He had put his name down for the "penillion" contest; should he prove successful, not he himself only, but Llanyglo also, the place of his birth, would be forever famous. He sat behind the semicircle of white-robed and oak-crowned and druid-like figures that occupied the front part of the platform, looking down on the vast oblong of faces, Saxon and Welsh, that resembled a packed bed of London Pride; he was in the tenor wedge of the chorus; and as the five hundred voices pealed together you thought of the roof and of that singer whose voice had shivered vessels of glass. . . . Coming out of the hall again at the end of the first day, Dafydd was still in his trance. As he walked along the street past the "Traf-ford" Tap, Tommy Kerr, who sat within drinking, hailed him and called for a song, while one of his boon companions crying "Nay, we don't ask nobody to sing for nowt!" cast a couple of pennies on the ground; but Dafydd seemed neither to see nor to hear. At the break-up after the last chorus an august hand had been placed on Dafydd's shoulder, and an archangelic voice had spoken to him, saying that he, he the great one, had heard of Dafydd Dafis; and what, after that, did pot-house insults matter? He passed on, his eyes still flashing and his face shining like the Silver Chair itself. . . .

Two days later he was proclaimed the victor in the "penillion" contest, and on the day after that, still drunk with song, he drove his road-engine again. And so passed Llanyglo's first Eisteddfod.

The Brass Band Contest five weeks later was a triumph in a different way. The impression now was one, not of unity, but of the keen spirit of faction. The "*Besses o' th' Barn*" were at the crest of their fame,

but the "*Black Dike*" ran them close, and not far behind came "*Wyke Temperance*" and "*Meltham Mills*"; and had these been, not Bands, but football teams, local rivalry could not have run higher. True, underneath the sporting interest lay the musical. This performer's "lipping" and the "triple-tonguing" of the other were matters of endless debate among the expert; nuances of ensemble and attack were hotly argued in strong Lancashire and Yorkshire accents; and the devotees were ready to fight with their fists over the fame of the conductors of their fancy. But, without unity, the Contest proved, for all save the Brass-band-maniacs, a little wearisome. The ear began to revolt against the reiterated "test-piece," and one pitied the judge hidden away in his carefully guarded cubicle. Fewer Welsh attended the Contest than had English the Eisteddfod, and a day was judged sufficient for it. After a sensational replay with the "*Besses*," "*Black Dike*" took pride of place, with "*Meltham Mills*" third. The strains of *Zampa* and *The Bronze Horse* sounded once more only, when they massed the Bands in the evening in the Floral Valley; and (the Council having sanctioned a charge of sixpence as the fee for entrance) the sum of £115 was taken at the temporary barriers. So passed the Brass Band Contest also.

By the June of that year the understructure of the Pier was finished, and the rest was advancing with the speed of paper-hanging. The contractors were under time-penalties to be ready for the formal opening on the forthcoming August Bank Holiday. All through the night the sounds of the planking could be heard, and pavilion-parts, lettered and numbered and ready gilded and painted, were rushed along in haste. At the same time the Big Wheel began to resemble the largest circle

of the Floral Valley set up on end; it was wonderful to stand beneath it and to gaze up through the intricacy of tie and strut and lattice at the sky. Immense hoardings filled a large part of Pontnewydd Street; by and by they would be taken down again, and the façades of those magnificent new hotels would appear; but Llanyglo would scarcely turn its head to look at them. They were getting used to this now. Besides, they had plenty else to do. The town was so full that they were turning away money into its nearest place of overflow — Porth Neigr.

Then, in the beginning of August, a hundred portents were fulfilled. There began to run into the station train after train, with three or four faces at each window. Doors opened almost before the engines had begun to slow down, and (as if the trains had been veins and somebody had suddenly slit them up, spilling out the life within) the platforms were suddenly black and overrun with people. They carried bags, baskets, hampers, parcels, stools, pillows, babies. Inside the carriages they left crumpled newspapers, trodden sandwiches, bottles, nuts, corks, the heads and tails of shrimps. Their tickets had been taken miles back — no collecting-staff could have coped for a moment with the emptying of those wheeled and windowed veins of impoverished blood. Parents carrying babies stood prudently aside from that first mad rush to the entrance. Many of them had been up since half-past four that morning; they had spent seven hours in the train, twelve and thirteen and fourteen in a carriage, standing, sitting on one another's knees, lying on the rows of feet; and now they made straight for air. Certain trains had been told off for week-end travellers; others were labelled "*Special*" or "*Day Excursion Only.*" Those who had come by these

would have seven hours in Llanyglo, and at the end of that time they would squeeze into the trains again for seven, eight, ten hours more — for on the return journey they must attend the convenience of every other wheel on the line, and a stand of an hour or so at two o'clock in the morning would be but an incident. During that short space in which they would breathe the wonderful Llanyglo air they would eat the meals they had brought with them, or else besiege the inns and eating-houses and tea-rooms and confectioners'-shops. They were the first trippers — spinning operatives, weavers, twisters, warp-dressers, mechanics, asbestos-hands, stokers, clerks, shopkeepers, the grey and unnumbered multitude itself. Some would enjoy themselves, some would vow they enjoyed themselves, and some would declare it “a toil of a pleasure,” and would drag about on hot and swollen and weary feet, repeating at intervals, ‘Niver again — niver as long as I live!’” And the lagging children's arms would be almost wrenched off at the shoulders, and some would fall asleep with the sticky paint of the penny toys dyeing their hands, and the platforms would begin to fill up again three hours before the time of departure of the train, for the sake of the chances of corner seats, or indeed of seats at all, and also because, on that horrible arduous day, the station itself would seem almost like a home. . . .

Yes, as the Lacey and Briggsses had followed Edward Garden, and those who could not (but would) afford it had followed the Briggsses and Lacey, and the *Utopia* readers these, and the fortnight and ten-days' people these, and all sorts and conditions of people for varying lengths of time these again, so now the unnumbered rest had come. . . . “The first tripper, and I'm off,” the Briggsses and the Lacey had said; and which of us

is not a Briggs or a Lacey in this? Which of us can say without misgiving that he would have remained in Llanyglo? Could we have endured the sight of our kind in this bulk — or could we have endured to think, either, that if they were not there for that dreadful day they would still be elsewhere? Can we, in the unshared solitude of our hearts, bear to think of this rank and damp and steaming human undergrowth at all? Would the Squire, seeing these, still have thought as much of his books on Church Plate and Brasses, still have defended the integrity of something not for all? Would Minetta Garden have looked on them with a sort of incurious interest as so many “types”? Or would we all, Minetta, the Squire, you, I, have felt meanly and skulkingly relieved when the last tail-light had died away in the night again?

There is neither “Yes” nor “No” to be answered. I may rant of brotherhood and humanity, but you — you may remember that cart jolting without noise over the sandhills, the blue and primrose petals of those butterflies, the amethyst-tufts of wild thyme, the milkwort, the harebells, and then, of a sudden, that V with the sea beyond. I, choosing to shoulder all the responsibility of a world in the making of which I was not consulted, may moisten that human peat with my tears, but you — you, passionate for beauty’s sake, may mourn a loveliness deflowered and a simplicity destroyed. It is no virtue in me, no harshness in you. We both are what we are and do what we can. Llanyglo also was what it had become and did what it could. And Llanyglo, after all, had a solace that we lack. It was an inferior one, but better than nothing. Their beach might be littered, their streets made pitiful; their lodging-house keepers might put every loose jug or china dog

or ornament away, and replace them again only after these had gone; strange accents might grate upon their ears, different and disliked minds frame the thoughts those accents expressed; yet balm remained. There was not a tripper, no, not the poorest of them, but spent his three, four, or five shillings in the town.

PART FOUR

I

THE BLIND EYE

DRUB-DRUB — drub-drub-drub — drub-drub —
It was the sound of heels on the Pier. From one end of it to the other they walked, past the recesses and lamp-standards and the bright kiosks where tobacco and confectionery and walking-sticks and picture-post-cards and souvenirs were sold, and then they turned and walked back. After a time the drub-drubbing became curiously hypnotising. At moments it conformed almost to a regular rhythm; then it broke up again into mere confusion, out of which another metrical beat would rise for a second or so and then become lost again. For long spaces the ear would become accustomed and cease to hear it, and would take in instead the lighter registers of tittering, soft laughter, the striking of matches and an occasional scuffle and call; but the groundwork of sound would break through again, like a muffled drum tapped by many performers at once, monotonous, reverberating, dead —

Drub-drub-drub — drub-drub — drub-drub —

It was half-past eight of a July night. Crowded as the Pier was, it would become still more so when the Concert Hall just within the turnstiles, and the Pavilion at the pier-head, turned out their audiences again. There would hardly be space to move them. The

Promenade was a sweep of brilliants; Gardd Street lay unseen behind it under a golden haze; behind that again the lighted rosette of the Big Wheel turned slowly high in the sky; and the great hotels of the front were squared and masceled with window-lights. All this dance of gold and silver made an already blue evening intensely blue, and the Pier was so long that, even with quick walking, several minutes passed between your losing the rattle of hand-clapping outside the Concert Hall at one end of it, and your picking up the strains of the Pavilion orchestra at the other.

Drub-drub-drub — drub-drub-drub — drub-drub ——

There was hardly a bed to be had in Llanyglo. Visitors who had rashly chosen to take their chance commonly passed their first night in the waiting-rooms of the railway station. Servant-girls lay in their clothes under kitchen tables, while their own garrets were let for half a sovereign a night. Dozens slept on sofas, chairs, hearthrugs, billiard-tables, on the Promenade benches, under the tarpaulins of wagonettes and chars-à-bancs, or curled up in the boats on the shore. They Boxed-and-coxed it as they could, and the police did not trouble to shake the slumberers on whom they turned their bull's-eyes in the nooks and arbours of the Floral Valley.

Drub-drub-drub — drub — drub ——

And who were they now, they whose heels wore down the Pier timbers and made the brain drowsy with their ceaseless tramp?

It was a curious and a rather arresting change. To all appearances, Llanyglo had now got a "better class of visitor" than it had had since the Briggses and Laceys had shaken the dust of the place from their feet. Even in this puzzle of gold and silver light and deep

mysterious blue, it could be seen that there was not much Holiday Club money there. In another fortnight or so those coffers would burst over the town, drenching it with gold; but in the meantime who were these others, and what were they doing at Llanyglo?

Let us ask the author of the *Sixpenny Guide*.

“When did you arrive? Only last night? And you’re stopping at the ‘Majestic’? Well, you’ve somebody there who can tell you more about it than I can — Big Annie the head-chambermaid on the first floor. There are a good many things about Llanyglo now that I’ve had to keep out of my *Guide*, you see. But I’ll tell you what I can.

“And I don’t want to give you any false impression. Don’t forget that scores and hundreds of families come here and bathe, and picnic, and dance, and go for drives, and enjoy themselves, and go away again without a notion that everybody here isn’t exactly like themselves. And there’s no harm in the Wakes people either. The worst you can say of them is that now and then one of them gets violently or torpidly drunk, as the case may be, and that all of them make a most hideous and infernal noise. So don’t think I’m talking disproportionately, and that this is the only place of its kind I was ever in.

“But I do mean this: that somehow or other we’ve now acquired a very peculiar kind of notoriety. You can deny it, disprove it, show that it isn’t there at all, and — there it remains all the time. For one thing, you’ll see if you look round that the place is very much less northern in character than it was, and as it happens that’s very significant. For it might conceivably happen that a northerner — or a southerner, or anybody else — might have his reasons for avoiding a place that was full

of other northerners, many of whom might know him (they have an expression in the North for the kind of thing I mean; they call it 'making mucky doorstones'). So you'll find lots and lots of Londoners here now, and midlanders, and easterners and westerners. They come here, where nobody's ever seen them before and will never see them again perhaps, for much the same reason that some Englishmen are said to go to Paris.

"I don't want to make them out more in number than they are. Spread out over the whole country they'd only be a fractional percentage, and you'd never notice them; but when they're brought together here they're quite enough to give the place a character. They aren't the open and reckless kind. Furtiveness — complete disappearance if possible — is the whole point. They're the men who arrange for somebody to post their letters home from the place they're supposed to be really at, and the women who, as the Bible says, eat and wipe their lips and say they haven't eaten. They want to dodge, not only everybody else, but themselves also, something they're perhaps afraid of in themselves, for a fortnight, three weeks, a month. You see, they've persuaded themselves (and Llanyglo's done too well out of them to undeceive them) that things done here somehow 'don't count.' If you want to do something you'd never dare to do in a place where you were known, you come to Llanyglo to do it. If you can imagine the oasis in the desert with exactly the contrary meaning — that's us. We're an asylum for those who've lost their moral memories.

"And it isn't that wedding-rings are juggled off and on, and false names entered in hotel registers, nor anything of that kind. That goes on more or less everywhere, and we haven't become notorious merely for that.

And as usual, it's easier to say what it isn't than what it is. It isn't the Trwyn, for example, though that does twitter so with kisses from morning till night that you'd think it was the grasshoppers. And it isn't the almost open displays you see at certain hours wherever you go. It isn't any one fact, not even the worst. It's a faint attar of some *abandonment*, some bottomlessness, that you can't name. It may be my imagination, but I've fancied I've actually smelt it with my nostrils, coming into it from a mile out of the town. They relinquish even appearances. Most of us have the grace to cover up our sins with a decent and saving hypocrisy, but these know and understand one another so horribly well. They seem to find a comfort that they're all in the same boat. As they say themselves, 'Heaven for climate but Hell for company.' Give them your name on your visiting-card and they'll ask you by and by what your *real* name is. Until then, neither your name nor anything else about you is their business. They haven't any business. For a week, or a fortnight, or a month, they've turned their backs on that tremendous common business that keeps the world going. It's the blind eye, and Llanyglo provides the blinkers. . . .

"But go and talk to Big Annie. She's really a rather remarkable woman. At stated hours she sits on point duty on the landing of her floor of eighty bedrooms, just where everybody's got to pass her, and if you look like making — er — a mistake (and your hotel's quite an easy place to get lost in) she sets you right without a quiver of her face. Yes, she's rather an alarming person. There's a swiftness about her way of summing up people from a single glance at their faces. Oh, you don't take Annie in with a wedding-ring and a 'darling' or so — especially when the lady

asks the darling whether he takes sugar in his early morning cup of tea. . . .

“ Yes, you go and see Annie.”

Drub-drub — drub-drub-drub —

After a time that stupor of the ear became a stupor of the eye also. Even when a match glowed before a face for a moment, the stage-like lighting gave you no physiognomical information. The lamps shone on the crowns of the passing hats, but the faces beneath them were lost; all cats were grey. Any one of them might have been a giggling flapper with her eyes still sealed to Life, or one of those others mentioned by the too-curious author of the *Guide*, who would be dead to sight and thought for a space that didn't count. Light frocks and darker hues, bare heads and plaits and shawls and hooded dominoes, shop-girl and high-school girl, caps and straws and panamas, pipes and cigarettes, youths thoughtless and youths predatory — you paid your threepence at the turnstiles and watched them pass and re-pass. Drub-drub-drub. . . . And if you sat long enough, changes began to be perceptible. The flappers who were evidently high-school girls began to be fewer, and others took their places — for most of the shops of Llanyglo closed at nine or half-past, and the released waitresses and assistants who had been on their feet all day were still not too weary to add to the drub-drubbing. It was difficult to say in what particular these were distinguishable. It was not their dress — the universal attainment of a certain standard of dressing is one of our modern miracles. You would not have had it from their own lips — you would have been tactless in the extreme not to have assumed that they also were visitors (as a matter of fact, they would calmly make appoint-

ments for four o'clock of the next day, knowing perfectly well that at that hour they would be giving change in a cash-desk or hurrying hither and thither with piles of bread and butter and trays awash with spilt tea). Perhaps it was the young men they greeted and their way of greeting them. They didn't come out for these last hours of the day to gossip with those to whom they had called "Sign!" all the afternoon, their own foremen, companions, or the tradesmen of the shop opposite.

Drub-drub — drub-drub —

There passed through the Season Ticket turnstile two young men. Both wore dark suits and conventional collars and ties (as if they, at any rate, had no need to don their coloured jackets and flannel trousers while they could), and the attendant at the turnstile had touched his cap as they had passed. One of them, the taller of the two, wore his straw hat halo-wise at the back of his head, filled his pipe as he walked, and looked cheerfully and unobservingly about him; the other's straw was well down, and the eyes beneath its brim sought somebody or something, and would apparently be satisfied with nothing less. The first was Percy Briggs, and everybody in Llanyglo knew Percy Briggs — Percy Briggs, who strolled casually into Hotel Cosies towards midday, nodded to the more favoured ones, said to the barmaid "So and So been in yet?" and, getting a bright "No, Mr. Briggs, not yet" for an answer, lounged out again without having had a drink — a sufficient gage of privilege and familiarity with the place. The other was John Willie Garden, who knew Llanyglo, knew which faces had been there last year and the year before, and was now looking for a face he had seen yesterday evening for one moment only and had then lost again.

The Pier was an old, old story to him now. Between seasons, on winter nights, the drub-drub of a few months before seemed sometimes still faintly to echo in his ears — this when the grey skies came, and in the hotels a few rooms only were kept open for unprofitable commercial travellers, and the Promenade was empty, and the Pleasure Packet Service laid up, and a walk to the end of the Pier and back seemed a long way to feet that had covered the distance twenty times on a summer's evening, and the colourless sea seemed to give to the red and white blink of the Trwyn Light a sudden and nearer significance. He knew every hour of Llanyglo's day — the hours of departure of the pleasure-boats to Rhyl and Llandudno and round Anglesey, the bathing-hours in the morning, the high-school parade at mid-day, the second bathing relay in the afternoon, the tea-hour, the walk of parents and children to see the boats come in again in the early evening, and then, as the evening wore on, the successive appearances and droppings out of this kind or that, the emptying of the Pavilions, the inflow of the shop-girls and waitresses, the rush for the public-houses half an hour before the Pier lights went out, the thinning numbers who beat the Promenade, the parties of the Alsations who sat up in one another's hotels long after every public drinking-place had been closed. He had nothing further to learn about it all, and it bored him. Only his search for that girl had brought him on the Pier to-night.

He had been almost certain he knew her, but where he had seen her face before he could not for the life of him remember. Perhaps he did not know her after all; indeed, when he came to think of it, no memory of a voice seemed to go with the face, so that the probability was that if he had seen her before he had never spoken

to her. She had been standing, in that blue twilight, clear of the throng, under the single crimson pier-head light, looking out over the water that seemed still to reflect a light that had faded from the sky, and for a moment John Willie had wondered what she was looking at. The next moment he had seen — and so, confound it, had twenty others. A yellow spot, like a riding-light, had risen out of the sea; almost as quickly as the second-hand of a watch moves, it had become a tip; and then the lookers-in at the glass sides of the Pavilion had run to see the rising of the bloated, refraction-magnified, burning yellow horn. In that little running of people he had lost her. Twice, thrice he had walked the whole length of the Pier, but without seeing her again. All of her that he could now remember was the carriage of her head and her plain black dress, and he knew that dress, in this extraordinary raising of the standard of dressing which implies the possession by almost everybody of two dresses at least, was an uncertain guide.

Another rattle of hand-clapping broke out as Percy Briggs and John Willie passed the turnstiles. "Any good looking in there?" Percy asked, nodding towards the Concert Hall, but John Willie made no reply. He was as cross as a bear with a sore head. Twice already he had rounded on Percy, who had proposed drinks at this place or that, and had snapped "You go if you want — I'm not keeping you;" but Percy had replied good-naturedly, "Oh, all right, keep your hair on."

The sounds of two more pairs of heels were added to the drub-drubbing on the planks of the Pier.

It seemed idle to seek, but John Willie stood looking in at the glass sides of the Pavilion at the pier-head, searching the bright and crowded interior. His mind

was as obstinately set as that of a mule. It seemed to him idiotic that all those rows and rows of people should clap the inanities of the young man in knee-breeched evening-dress who strutted and made painted eyes over the top of a flattened opera-hat, or encore Miss Sal Volatile, all spidery black silk stockings below and cocksfeather boa and enormous black halfmoon hat above. John Willie turned away to the low-burning crimson pier-light. He stood there for some moments, and then began to stride back the length of the Pier again.

“Chucking it?” said Percy, half sympathetic, half “getting at” John Willie.

“Come on to the Kursaal,” John Willie grunted.

The Kursaal lay behind the two frontages of Gardd and Pontnewydd Streets, and it could be reached from either thoroughfare. From Gardd Street, up another short street, the great lighted semicircle of what was then its Main Entrance could be seen; and if the minor entrance from Pontnewydd Street was at that time less resplendent, that was because the Kerrs’ Hafod stood in the way of opening it up. With its grounds and theatre and vast dancing-hall, the Kursaal covered getting on for an eighth of a square mile; but a third or more of that was still in progress of being laid out and planted — once more by Philip Lacey.

Crossing the Promenade to the less crowded pavement beyond, John Willie and Percy strode the half-mile to the Kursaal. There was a queue about the turnstiles, but John Willie made a sign to an attendant, who flung up the Exit Only barrier. They passed under trees with many-coloured electric lights among the branches, and the slowly turning Big Wheel, which made a quarter-arch of lights over the tower of the Central

Hall, dipped behind it again as they reached the steps that led to the vestibule.

For size alone, apart from any other consideration, the dancing-hall of the Llanyglo Kursaal is one of the wonders of the North. It cost a hundred thousand pounds to build, and since it can dance a thousand couples, to seek anybody there without going up into the balconies is like looking for a needle in a bottle of hay. The band was not playing at the moment when Percy and John Willie entered; but before they had reached the top of an empty half-lighted series of staircases the distant strains of a Barn Dance had broken out. Then, with the pushing at a door, it burst loudly upon them. John Willie strode down the shallow gallery steps, made for a front seat whence he could see the whole length of the vast oblong below, spread out his elbows and set his chin on his wrists, and, once more muttering "You go and get your drink if you want," began to search the hall with gloomy blue eyes, very much as a boy flashes a bit of looking-glass hither and thither in the sun.

Now when the Wakes people come to Llanyglo, and the pleasant family parties yield place a little, and drive in the mountains more frequently, and leave the Pier and Promenade a little earlier, and gather more often at one another's hotels — even then that dancing-hall is so vast that twenty different elements can be accommodated there without mixing or encroachment. But that series of precipitations had not yet taken place. That night all was homogeneous. Perhaps here and there other contacts had sparsely "crossed," as it were, that fresh blooming, as the white hawthorn takes on faintly the hue of the pink in the spring, but that was probably rare. John Willie, had

he had eyes for it, looked down upon a wonderful sight. The hall was a creamy gold, with bow after bow along its balcony tiers; without its other innumerable clusters of lights, the eight arc-lamps in its high roof would have lighted it no better than a railway station is lighted; and the mirrors on the walls were hardly more polished than its satiny floor. A fully appointed stage half-way down one of the sides held an orchestra of thirty performers; walking across that wonderfully swung floor you felt something almost alive under your feet; and four thousand feet moved upon it that night.

It was beautiful. The band was playing, slowly, as is the dancing-fashion of the North, that Barn Dance; and almost every girl was in white. The whites were the whites of flowers — the greenish white of guelder-roses, the yellow white of elder or of meadow-sweet, the pinkish white of the faintest dog-rose, the dead white of narcissi, but little that was not white. And because of all that soft whiteness, faces caught by the sun were browner, and hair that the wind had blown through all day glossier, and eyes brighter, and perhaps blushes quicker and more readily seen. And to the whole bright spectacle was added the impressiveness of unfaltering rhythm and simultaneousness of movement. The Colour on the Horse Guards' Parade is not honoured with greater precision of physical movement than these disciplined feet, these turning bodies; the pulsing floor itself answered to the delicate dip of the conductor's stick. For two bars . . . but look at them as they pour towards you down the left side of the room. Every face is towards you, forty abreast, and forty following those, and more forties, columns and squadrons of them, coming forward as grain comes down a channel, as graded fruit pours down a shoot. You do not

see where they come from — their turn is far away under the pillars there; you do not see where they go to — they pass away out of sight again beneath you. They do not seem the same over and over again, but all the youths and maidens of the world, coming on and on, and new, always new. . . . Then you look to the right, and instantly your eyes are sensible of a darker ensemble. That is because you see, not faces now, but the backs of heads; not gaily striped shirts and bright ties, but plain shoulders only. And they pass away as they came, all the youths and maidens of the world with their backs to you. Not one turns for a look at you, not one nods you farewell. It is like your own youth leaving you. . . . And then magically all alters. Two more bars and, as if some strange and all-potent and instantaneously acting element had been dropped into the setting and returning human fluid, of a sudden it all breaks up. It effervesces. Every couple is seen to be waltzing. Two by two they turn, and your youth is no longer coming to you nor departing from you, but stops and plays. It stops and plays — for two bars — and lo, the other again. Once more they troop towards you with their faces seen, once more troop away with faces averted. The illusion becomes a spell. Coming, going, all different, all the same, parallel legions with faces to the future and faces to the grave — it is a little like Llanyglo itself. Suddenly you find yourself drawn a little closer to John Willie Garden. You do not want to look down from a balcony on all the young manhood and young womanhood of the world. One, one only, will suffice you, and with her you will come brightly down, all eyes and rosiness and laughter, and with her go in a soberer livery away again. . . . But luckier you than John Willie if you find that one. His eyes, practised

as they were in scanning the Kursaal throng, did not see her. The *coda* came; the vast oblong well lighted up for a moment as a poplar lights up when the wind blows upon it — it was the slightly wider swing of skirts seen from above as the dance quickened to its finale; and then, as if something else potent and inimical had been dropped into the solution, there was a break for the sides, and the shining floor was seen again.

“Damn!” muttered John Willie Garden.

Percy, relishing the spectacle of John Willie on the hunt, was in no hurry. “The arbours?” he suggested laconically as John Willie rose; but again John Willie did not reply. For one thing, it was a little difficult to see into those dark nooks among Philip Lacey’s barrows and planks and new larches and heaps of upturned earth; for another, he had an assurance that she he sought would not be there.

“Come on,” he grunted.

“Ah!” said Percy, with an exaggerated shake of himself. “Has the moment at last arrived when we quaff?”

But already John Willie had stridden on ahead.

They took a known short cut through dark and obstructed windings, and presently reached the side-door of the adjoining hotel. It had certain rooms where ladies unaccompanied might get a drink, but into these they barely glanced. Percy grinned. Should John Willie find the object of his search in one of the other rooms, then there was reasonable hope of a row. He had never before seen John Willie so persistently asking for trouble.

The door at which they paused showed a room crowded, bright, and full of a lawn of tobacco-smoke. It was not a large room, but it must have held twenty

men and as many women, and you could have seen their like on any summer Sunday at Tagg's Island, or any day in Regent Street, or on Brighton Front. They sat in chairs of saddlebag or leather, and the fingers of the men were poised over the large cigar-boxes the waiters held before them, or else made little circular gestures about the circumference of the little round tables, as much as to say "Same again" or "Mine." Little but champagne, liqueurs, or brandies-and-soda seemed to be to their taste, and John Pritchard might indeed have thought them "very ritss whatever"; gold seemed to come from them at a touch, notes at little more. Just within the door a very brown man sat with a plump little lady about whose short fingers gems seemed to have candied, as sugar candies about a string; and next to them another man admired as much of his companion's shoes as could be seen for the champagne cooler on the floor. There was not much noise. There was a good deal of whispering about horses.

A ring was widened for the new-comers about one of the larger tables — "Arthur!" Percy called as he passed one of the waiters. "Bag o' beer, and Mr. P. Briggs's compliments to Miss Price and will she please come at once." They settled down.

This was Percy's present humour — to drink pints of beer from a silver tankard that resembled a tun among the gem-like liqueur-glasses, and to make love to Miss Price, the fat and creasy and unapproachable hotel-manageress. Perhaps he intended to convey that few other new sensations remained to him at the end of his three-and-twenty hard-lived years. Sometimes John Willie laughed at this posture of his friend's, but tonight he thought it merely stupid and idiotic. He had come here because he had thought he might as well be

having a drink as fruitlessly searching; now he thought he might as well be searching as having a drink he didn't want. Percy was ordering the drinks now—"Vermouth, Val? Cissie, your's is avocat, I know. Now, Johannes Guglielmus, what will you imbibe?" Presently John Willie sat glowering at a whiskey-and-soda. The girl on his left, whom Percy had addressed as Cissie, made an arch attempt to talk to him, and then gave up the laborious task and turned her back. Miss Price, the manageress, appeared, and Percy began his stupid and facetious love-making. John Willie wondered whether he had searched the Dancing-Hall thoroughly after all.

The table grew noisy, and there were appreciative grins from other tables; Percy was trying to draw that disgustingly fat manageress on to his knee. And, with the pace thus set by Percy, the whole room woke up. The waiters began to move about more quickly and to call for assistance, and there was applause as somebody opened the lid of the piano. . . .

John Willie sat before his untouched whiskey-and-soda. He was once more wondering whether it would be worth while to return to the Dancing-Hall, or whether she might not by this time be on the Pier. And again, and ever again, he wondered when and where he had seen her before. . . .

Again Percy's silly joyous voice broke in. He was expostulating with Miss Price.

"Look, Cissie's sitting on Val's ——"

"Let be, Mr. Briggs — indeed I will not be pulled about like that! ——"

"Then sit on Mr. Garden's — cheer him up — he's looking for Gertie, the Double-Blank from Blackburn, and can't find her ——"

“ There, now, Mr. Briggs! — Now I shall have to go and get a needle and thread! ——”

Somebody interposed.—“ Here, chuck it, Percy; somebody might come in. . . . Hallo, John Willie, you off?”

For John Willie had pushed back his chair. He reached for his hat. “ Leave us a lock of your hair for my mourning-brooch,” Percy’s muffled voice came after him, but he was off.

Perhaps she would be at the Wheel. . . .

But she was not at that immense tyre slung with upholstered coaches, nor yet to be seen at the side-shows round about. He left the Kursaal, and joined the dense throng that made a double stream under the Promenade lamps. He told himself he was a fool. She might have left Llanyglo within a few hours of his having seen her — might be back in any of the towns of England or Scotland or Wales by this time. But he did not cease to seek. He reached the Pier again. Drub-drub-drub-drub-drub-drub-drub. It was now solid with flesh, and indeed he had not walked half its length when the closing-bell clanged. The glow over the pier-head Pavilion went suddenly out, and so, a few moments later, did a hundred yards of the lamps on either side. He heard the usual cries of mock-terror. It was no good going up there now. . . .

Nor would she be in the Floral Valley. In fact, he had better give it up. He had better clear out of Llanyglo for a bit. He was sick of this dusty dance of pleasure, and the Wakes crowds would be here in a few days. . . . He would go and fish up Delyn. The Water Scheme hadn’t spoiled the lake; they had only built a quite small dam with locks at one end, and the grid of service-reservoirs was lower down. Sharpe had left the

hut. He would go there for a few days and have his bread and mutton and cheese sent up from the inn in the valley below. He would tell Minetta to get somebody to stay with her, and would go in the morning. . . .

He was passing the closed fancy-shop at the corner of Gardd Street when he came to this resolution; and suddenly he stopped dead. Minetta! . . . What was it that the thought of his sister, coming at this moment, reminded him of? It was odd, but it had certainly reminded him of something that had seemed to come near him only to escape him again immediately. Minetta! . . . He saw Minetta daily. There was nothing new about Minetta. She looked after the house, and if he wasn't going to be in for meals he mentioned the fact, or sometimes didn't, and beyond that, to tell the truth, he didn't very often think of Minetta. He didn't suppose she would ever marry — wasn't that kind. He remembered that years ago that genial idiot Percy Briggs had fancied himself "sweet" on her, but that sketching of hers —

Ah!

John Willie, who had been still standing at the corner, moved slowly forward again. He had got it.

He *knew* he'd been right! It was a little boast of his that he remembered faces rather well, and the thing that had perplexed him for two days was now clear. In a flash he saw in his mind the Llanyglo of the days of the Briggses and Laceys. He saw a bright diminutive picture of deck-chairs and bathing-tents on the shore, and June Lacey and Wiggie having their fortunes told. And he saw a gipsy child, with a head held as if it had borne an invisible pitcher, and then a foot cut by a piece of glass, and himself and Percy packed off home in disgrace, and Percy's mother washing the

gashed foot with water from a picnic-basket and tying it up with a handkerchief. Then Minetta had come up, and had said that she was going to make a sketch of the child. . . .

Ah! It was *she* who had stood under the red pier-light, watching that cadmium horn of the moon that lifted itself out of the sea!

II

JUNE

AS it happened, John Willie did not go off fishing on the morrow. He expected that Minetta would be in bed when he got home, but as he passed up the path he saw a light burning high in the front of the house. It was in the room beneath that date-stone under which he had once put a sixpence, and that room, because of its high and uninterrupted view of the sea, was one of the guest-chambers. He wondered who had come.

His supper was laid in the dining-room, but he did not want it, and so passed straight upstairs. As he turned along the landing to his own room he heard a door opened on the floor above, and his sister called "Is that you?" He answered, entered his bedroom, and began to undress.

But he had scarcely got his boots unlaced when there came a tap at the door, and Minetta entered. Her dark hair was in plaits, she wore a wrap over her nightdress, and she carried on her hip a tray with two claret-stained glasses and a salver with a cut cake. Evidently there had been a girls' bedroom orgie.

"Who's come?" John Willie asked, throwing aside his second boot.

"June Lacey. You knew she was coming," Minetta answered accusingly.

"No, I didn't — first I've heard of it."

"You never hear anything when you're reading a

newspaper. I told you at breakfast this morning, and that she was going to wire the time of the train. And you were out, and I had to leave everything and go and meet her myself."

"Sorry," John Willie grunted. He remembered now. "I mean, I didn't gather it was to-day."

"Well, I hope you'll manage to spare her an hour or two now that she's here," Minetta said a little crossly. "I did tell her to come just whenever she wished, and she didn't know the Wakes were coming on."

"All right," John Willie yawned. "I was going fishing, that's all; but I won't if you don't want. How long's she staying?"

"At least a fortnight. So don't say I haven't told you that. And do try to be in just occasionally. Have you had supper?"

"I didn't want any, thanks. Sorry I forgot, Min. Say good night to June for me."

Five minutes later he had turned out the gas and tumbled into bed.

Except that she postponed his escape from ennui for a day or two, June's arrival was a matter of indifference to him. He had known her for so long that he regarded her almost as if she had been a split-off portion of Minetta herself, that happened to possess its own apparatus of speech and locomotion. He could no more have said whether she was pretty than he could have said whether Minetta was pretty. It was no trouble to talk to June. As much talk as was necessary came of itself. He had only to say "You remember so-and-so ——" or "Like that time when ——" and conversation sustained itself out of a hundred trifles desultorily familiar to both of them. That, at

any rate, was a comfort. With anybody new he would have had to take a certain amount of trouble. With June it didn't matter.

So, at breakfast the next morning, he did not actually read the newspaper as he ate, but he threw out a remark from time to time as it were over the edge of an imaginary newspaper, and then asked June what she would like to do that morning. When she replied that she wanted him to do just whatever he had intended to do, he even hoisted himself to the level of a little ceremoniousness, and told her that he had no plans at all save to amuse her — what about a bathe, the morning Concert in the Pavilion, a drive in the afternoon, and so on? By keeping to this beaten track of enjoyment, he could, at one and the same time, be entertaining June and keeping an eye open for that gipsy girl who haunted his imagination.

“A bathe?” said June. . . . “Oh, of course! How stupid of me! I'd forgotten there was mixed bathing here now. What a change! . . . Wasn't there a frightful row about it?”

There had been a row, but it had been short and sharp. Briefly, Blackpool and Douglas and Llandudno had settled the matter for them, and, after a protest for conscience's sake — and also a little more well-judged absenteeism — even Howell Gruffydd, now Chairman of the Council, and John Pritchard, a Councillor in his second year, had yielded. A portion of the shore had been set apart for this “playing with fire,” but within a year even this had become a dead letter. The only thing that now distinguished this portion of the beach from the rest was a certain heightened jocundity in the advertisements on the sides of the bathing-machines at that spot. The virtues of Pills and Laxa-

tives were a little more loudly announced there, and this heartiness and lack of false shame culminated in a long hoarding that was erected on one of the groynes, and bore on one side the legend "THE NAKED TRUTH" (which was that Somebody's Remedies were the Best), and on the other the words "TO THE PURE" (who were warned against Fraudulent Imitations). For the rest folk now bathed where they would.

So, idly, John Willie told June of the town's struggle between its principles and its living, and then they rose from the table. When June heard that Minetta wasn't coming with them she wanted to stay behind and help; but Minetta persuaded her that she would only be in the way, and that anyway she couldn't help her with her painting; and presently, with towels and costumes, she and John Willie went forth and, after a casual discussion about its being rather soon after breakfast to bathe, descended to the beach.

June was certainly a pretty enough girl for even a fastidious young man to be seen about with. No neater shoes than those that moved beneath the gypsophylla of her petticoats were to be seen on the whole Promenade, and she held her longish figure trimly, and was almost on the "fast" side with her little thin switch of a cane. She was an inch taller than John Willie, too, which was another inch of smartness to be seen walking with. He found her a bathing-machine and secured another for himself; and when, presently, they lay on their backs side by side a hundred yards farther out from the shore than anybody else, with the sun hot on their faces and their eyes blinking up at the intense blue, they continued to talk as they had talked before — of who had been to Llanyglo lately and who had

not, and of what had become of Mrs. Maynard, and whether anybody had seen Hilda Morrell lately, and whether that London man — what was his name — Mr. Ashton — had been heard of since. John Willie, for his part, asked how Mrs. Lacey and Wiggie were, and told June what a lot was thought of her father's laying out of the Kursaal Gardens, and asked her when the work was expected to be finished.

Then they came in again, dressed, and regained the Promenade.

John Willie was surprised to find how quickly the morning went. The Concert was half over by the time they reached the Pavilion, and when the Concert was over and the drub-drub on the boards of the Pier became incessant, June said that, build as they would, it would be a long time before they built on the Trwyn. To that John Willie replied that he wasn't so sure, and told her of how at one time it had been a toss-up whether they wouldn't make a terrace there and build the "Imperial" on it; and June's reply was that she would never have thought it. Then John Willie looked at his watch, and at first thought it must have stopped, the time had flown so. They turned their faces to the Promenade again, and at a Booking Kiosk John Willie ordered a landau for half-past two. Minetta (he told June) would have finished her work by then, and the three of them could go either out Abercelyn way, or through Porth Neigr and round home, or along the Delyn road, just as June wished. June said that if she really had her choice, she would like the Abercelyn drive, because it was years since she had been there, and she would like to see how much it had altered.

So out towards Abercelyn the three of them went that afternoon, and June's eyes opened wide at the

Sarn manganese sidings, and John Willie told her to mind that gypsophylla of her petticoats against the coal-heaps and grease-boxes of the wagons. Then back in the landau again, he took a well-earned rest while Minetta and June talked. He leaned back against the hot leather, and smoked and watched them, and wondered, first, whether anybody would ever marry Minetta, and, next, whether anybody would ever marry June, and then all at once found himself wondering about the gipsy girl again.

Suppose he should take seats for June and Minetta at some entertainment that evening, should see them comfortably settled, and should then go out for another look for her? . . .

But, now that he knew who she was, he thought of her, somehow, ever so slightly differently. He was no less set on finding her; indeed he was more set; but part of the possible surprise and excitement had certainly gone. Had he apparently not been destined not to see her again, the thing would have been less of an adventure than he had at first supposed. There would have been far fewer discoveries to make. It might even have been difficult to talk to her. He could talk pleasantly to June and be thinking of something else all the time; but he could hardly have asked Ynys Lovell how her mother was getting on with her chair-mending and fortune-telling, or have told her that he had heard that her kinsman Dafydd Dafis had won the "penillion" contest at the Eisteddfod. . . .

Ah! —

Again he had it, and, lying back on the hot leather of the hired landau, wondered that he had not had it sooner. Of course — Dafydd Dafis. If anybody knew

where she was, Dafydd would know. *That* was what he would do that evening while Minetta and June were at the Concert. He would take a stroll to Dafydd's house (which was no longer the single-roomed cottage near the old Independent Chapel, but a two-roomed one in Maengwyn Street), and he would sit down and have a smoke and ask Dafydd how all was with him. . . .

At this point he became conscious that June was speaking to him. She was offering him a penny for his thoughts. Instantly he fell into the rut of easy conversation again. It took him hardly a moment to find a topic.

"Eh?" he said. . . . "Oh! — You can have them for nothing. I was just thinking of that place of the Kerrs in Pontnewydd Street. I suppose you've heard all about that?"

"No, I've not heard a word," June declared. "Do tell me!"

After all, it was but a step from his real thought to the narrative he now told June. Between Dafydd Dafis and Tommy Kerr was now the association of an all but declared feud, which would break out into open enmity the moment anything happened to Tommy's brother Ned. More than any man in Llanyglo Dafydd had writhed at that wonderful building of the Hafod Unos, and since then he had remembered something else that had set him darkly flushing. It had been Tommy Kerr (or one of his boon companions — it came to the same thing) who, when Dafydd had returned rapt after the first day of the Eisteddfod, had cast two-pence on the ground and had drunkenly demanded a song. Yes, that remark, scarce heard at the time, had

come back since. They had offered him, Dafydd, their dirty dross in exchange for Song, and had bidden him stoop to pick it up. . . .

And that mortal insult had reminded Dafydd of an older memory still. This was, that of the four Kerrs, Tommy had been the only one who had not tumbled into that open boat when that chilling cry of "*Llong-drylliad!*" had sounded on that stormy night years and years before. That that had not been Tommy's fault mattered nothing; as soon as Dafydd had remembered this he had felt himself released from the last shadow of an obligation. It was another stick to beat Tommy with and "beating him" now meant, as everybody knew, waiting until his brother died and then "purring" him out of the Hafod, if not by fair means, then — well, purring him out none the less.

And that stick Tommy was to be beaten with was only the latest of many. It was a whole history of sticks — of the Council's Sons of Belial set at Tommy, collectors, inspectors of this and that and the other, policemen to apprehend him for drunkenness, sergeants to warn publicans that if they harboured Tommy they might be made to feel it in other ways. . . . But lately they had withdrawn this last prohibition. Putting their heads together, they had judged it best that Tommy should drink all he could, and more. . . . He had done so, and did not seem a single penny the worse for it. Moreover, he had now openly declared himself an abominator of Welshmen and everything else Welsh. Nightly he zig-zagged home crying out against the whole smiling, thievish crew, their Kursaals and Pavilions and Dancing-Halls and Concerts Llanyglo. He lurched along Pontnewydd Street after everybody else had gone to bed, roaring "*Glan Meddwdod Mwyn.*" How he

had twenty times escaped breaking his neck when they had laid down the Pontnewydd Street tramlines nobody knew. . . . And whenever he remembered that they wanted his Hafod and would have it as soon as Ned died, he offered to *give* it away to any Welshman who would repeat after him, word for word . . . but his forms of words varied widely, and no more than the Amalekites could some of those against whom he railed pronounce his words that began with "sh."

So John Willie, as the landau bowled homewards, had to tell June all this, and June was extraordinarily interested. Minetta watched them both, and, in her turn, wondered about John Willie and *his* marrying. She liked to have June to visit her; she wasn't so sure that she wanted June as a standing ornamental dish. Indeed she rather thought she didn't, and, allowing for many large but still accidental differences, Minetta was not without a trace of the malicious humour of Tommy Kerr himself.

In fairness she had to admit, however, that so far there were no signs that June was setting her cap at John Willie.

That night again, however, John Willie had little luck of his searching, this time of Dafydd Dafis. He sought him at his home, he sought him abroad, but he failed to find him and he joined June and his sister again where they sat listening to The Lunas, those incomparable Drawing-Room Entertainers. He bought them chocolate and he bought them ices, and then, at the end of the performance, he proposed a walk along the Promenade before they turned in. Not to lose them, he passed an arm through either of theirs, his sister's arm and that of this tall and pretty and undisturbing extension of his sister. They set their faces

towards the Pier that stretched like a sparkling finger out to sea.

It was the hour of the ebb, and lately, at that hour, an odd and new activity had begun to make sharper that contrast between the bright and crowded and restless Promenade and the solemn void that pushed as it were its dark breast against that two-miles-long chain of gold and silver lamps, straining the slender fetter into a curve. Down below the railings, at three or four points, not more, an upturned face with tightly shut eyes was praying aloud. They looked like little floating, drowned, yet speaking masks. Each evangelist had his little knot of three or four companions, but these had come with him, and of hearers they had none. They stood on the trampled sand, just below the gas-lighted line of pebbles; a boat drawn up, or a yard or two of groyne, struggled between light and shadow beyond them; far out in the bay the twinkle of a solitary light could be seen; the rest was blackness and immensity. It made Infinity seem strangely weak. Here It was, striving to make Itself known to the finite, Its sole instrument a little oval mask and a voice that could not be heard five yards away; and never a head was turned. Calling and laughing, the babel of their voices like the rattle of the pebbles that roll back with the retiring wave, they passed and passed and passed. One would have said that some vast angelic skater had cut that sweeping outside-edge of light, and then, repulsed, had rushed away into the darkness again.

And this was something else for John Willie to tell this pretty, unexigent June. It had only been going on about a fortnight, he said, but he didn't think they'd heard the last of it yet. There was a Revival or something coming slowly up the coast, he said, and

— who did June think was doing it? — why, Eesaac Oliver Gruffydd!

“ Never! ” June exclaimed.

“ Rather! You remember him, don't you? Howell Gruffydd the grocer's son; pale-faced chap, with a great lump of hair; and by Jove, he is stirring 'em up! He started at Aberystwith, and worked his way up through Aberdovey and Towyn and Barmouth and Portmadoc, with no end of crowds following him wherever he went. I expect he'll be here presently. If he comes when the Wakes are on there *will* be a shindy! . . . I say, aren't you feeling a bit cold? Better be getting along home. I'll take you as far as the corner, and then if you don't mind I'll leave you — I want to find a man if I can ——”

Five minutes later he had got rid of them, and stood in meditation. Was it worth while trying for Dafydd Dafis again? Or taking another stroll along the Pier? Perhaps it wasn't. He was rather tired, and this seemed a stupid kind of thing he had been doing for the last few days. He'd potter about with June for another day — perhaps he had rather neglected Minetta lately — and then for the fishing up Delyn. In that way he would be off just as the Wakes people arrived. Already the lodging-house keepers were getting ready for them, putting away their ornaments and so on. They would be here on Friday night; to-day was Wednesday; John Willie would be off on Friday morning.

This time he kept to his decision. He walked about with the pretty and untroublesome June all the next morning, and in the afternoon Minetta joined them. She approved warmly of his fishing-plan, and said she was sure the change would do him good. He told them

to keep away from the crowds and not to be out too late, and then, on the Friday morning set off.

When, at nine o'clock the same night, he walked up the path again and appeared in the dining-room just as June and Minetta were thinking of going to bed, Minetta stared. She had thought him miles away.

She stared still harder when he mumbled that he had "forgotten something," and intended to be off again in the morning.

III

DELYN

HE had not at first seen that black dress. Sharpe's old cottage was never locked, and he had walked straight in, had put down his little dressing-bag, and had begun to empty his pockets, setting his flask, his fly-book, his store of tobacco and certain provisions on the little deal table under the single window. At a first glance there was nothing to show that the place had been entered since he had last been there. The mattress of Sharpe's narrow pallet had been rolled up at the bed-head and a patchwork quilt spread over it; the two windsor chairs stood in their accustomed places; and the rods in their brown canvas covers stood as usual in the corner. Only Sharpe's photographs had gone from the walls, leaving the little black heads of nails and tacks, each over its slightly paler oblong of plain deal boarding.

Had not John Willie thought that he had better drag the bedding on which he was to sleep out into the sun at once, he would not have found the frock. It had been thrown across the roll of mattress and covered with that old piece of patchwork. Nor, since it was folded in a square, did he even then recognise the thing for a frock. Only when he had picked it up and it had revealed itself had he stood, suddenly arrested, alternately gazing at it and then looking obliquely at the floor. Then, as he had slowly put it down again, at its full

length this time, there had peeped at him from half under the roll of mattress, first a white linen collar with one of the little sham pearl studs that are given away with such things still in one of its button-holes, and next a pair of tiny cylindrical cuffs. . . .

Perhaps already, deep within himself, he had known that she was not far away. . . .

Then, slowly and methodically, he had begun to search the hut. His search had been productive of the following discoveries:—

Thrust under the bed: A newish oval brown tin box (which he had not opened), and a pair of black shoes.

On the lower shelf of Sharpe's little provision-cup-board: a round narrow-brimmed black hat.

On the upper shelf, among cups, plates, and other odds and ends: A seven-pound paper bag half full of flour, and a mug with some still fresh milk in it — he tasted it.

Outside the hut: A stone or two in a little clearing in the fern, a stick-heap, the ashes of a recent fire, and a frying-pan.

Then he had re-entered the hut. He had sat down in one of the windsor chairs. He had been filling his third or perhaps his fourth pipe when she herself had appeared in the doorway.

All this had been the day before.

As he now walked up that one-in-seven slope under the firs he remembered again, for the fiftieth time in twenty hours, her appearance as she had stood there. She had worn an old red blouse which she had not troubled to tuck in at the waist, a petticoat of faded greenish-blue (no gypsophylla there), and her legs and

feet had been bare. And at first he had thought she was going to run away. But she had only recoiled as a cat recoils, yielding ground without abandoning it. He himself had not moved. Move, and she might still be off as suddenly as a hare; sit still and say "Hallo, Ynys, not much in the chair-mending line up here, is there?" and she might stay. . . . And now, as he trudged up under the firs, he blamed Llanyglo that he had not heard that her mother was dead. Had Llanyglo remained a hamlet, or had it grown merely reasonably and within measure, the death even of Belle Lovell would have been an event; now, with towns in Lancashire half-emptied (he had seen it that morning, Llanyglo black and boiling like a cauldron of pitch with the people of the Wakes) — now such simple happenings passed unnoticed. Belle had died a year before, but that was not the reason Ynys wore black. She wore black because black was the livery of Philip Lacey's Liverpool flower-shop girls. Black showed up the flowers to better advantage. Ynys, after months of lonely wanderings and getting of her bread as best she could, had remembered Philip Lacey's promise when she had cut her foot that morning on the shore, had tramped to Liverpool, had asked for Philip at his principal establishment in Lord Street, and now sold stately blooms the poor hedgerow cousins of which she had formerly given away, pattering bare-foot after pedestrians on the road with them in her hand. She had been given a fortnight's holiday, and had come to Llanyglo to spend it.

As the path under the firs grew steeper still, John Willie wondered whether she would have kept her word to him. He had made her welcome to the cottage of which she had already made free, but that, he knew,

did not mean that she might not have packed up and fled the moment he had turned his back — no, not even though she had promised not to do so. He had seen enough of her yesterday to guess that her word given would be an empty and artificial thing the moment her inclination changed; nay, she might have given it with no intention whatever of keeping it, just to gain a little time. Even should he find her frock and her oval tin box still there, that would not necessarily mean that she would return. A box of matches was her luggage. Except as a depository for these things she had not used the hut. She had cooked her meals outside, and had slept on a litter of bracken.

Nevertheless, John Willie had left the cottage to her, and, for fear a stray shepherd might gossip, had himself returned home rather than sleep at the inn a few miles below.

He continued to climb, past rocks spotted with pennywort and trickling with rills, orange and whitey-green with lichen and tongued with polypodi, past crops of dead nettle and vistas of fronds, past dust of pine-needles and debris of cones. Now and then a flutter of wings broke the stillness of the aisles, but no song; and always he had the skyline almost overhead on his right, and on his left, beyond the little grid of reservoirs far below, the crisscrossing AAAA's of a mountain-side of larches.

She had not taken advantage of his absence to fly. He saw her as he ceased to climb and gained the half-fold that held Llyn Delyn in its crook. She was standing outside the hut, but she was not wearing the old unconfined red blouse of the day before now. The small spot he saw a quarter of a mile ahead was a black one. He waved his hand, but she did not respond.

He saw her sit down with her back against the wall of the hut and cross her arms over her knees. Three minutes later he was standing beside her.

And now that he had come he was not very clear in his mind why he had come. True, he could have given a dozen reasons—the bursting over the town of that flood of operatives he had seen that morning, his desire to fish, his wish (as he now suddenly and rather startlingly knew) to escape further attendance on June, and so forth; and these reasons would have been precisely a dozen too many. Had all Lancashire been drubbing on the Pier and she standing under the crimson light watching that strange and dhowlike sail of the moon glaring orange over the water, John Willie would not have been up Delyn. He had intended to fish, but fishing was now far from his thoughts. And already he was aware of another thing, namely, that while June had been no trouble at all to talk to, talk with Ynys was a heavy business. Yesterday, every sentence he had attempted had been as difficult as if it had been the first. Only by a series of almost violent extractions had he learned that her mother was dead and that she sold flowers (curious that they should have been June's father's flowers!) in Liverpool. He supposed he must begin to talk again now. He could hardly be with her and not talk. Well, if he must talk, he would.

“I say, you're well out of it all to-day!” he exclaimed, with apparent heartiness. “They began to come in at eleven last evening, and they've been coming in all night. Whew, but I ran, I can tell you!”

She had been looking in the direction of the lake, which, however, she could hardly have seen, so low did she sit; and he, as he stood, could see no more

of her than the straight white parting of her hair and her tanned forearms and wrists about her knees. The black of her dress was a sooty black, but you would only have called her hair black because there was nothing else to call it. It was neither more nor less black than a bowl of black lustre is black; it had a surface, but it had also depths where you saw the sun again, and the sky lurked, and the green of the ferns that grew about the hut. Had John Willie put his hand near it it might have been dimly reflected, as it would have been reflected in a peat pool.

The sound of his voice seemed almost to startle her, but she did not look up.

"Hwhat do you say?" she said. She slightly overstressed the internal "h's," and her accent was Welsh, but uniquely soft. As she had not heard, he had to repeat his remark.

"I mean those Wakes people. There are thousands of them there now." He made a little motion of his head behind him. "It's better up here." Then, as still she did not reply, he asked her a direct question. "You didn't stay long in Llanyglo, did you?"

"I stay there one day," she answered. A scarcely perceptible movement of her forefinger accompanied the numeral.

"Oh, then of course that was the day I saw you. Did you see me?"

"No."

"You were standing at the pier-head, watching the moon rise."

Ynys did not deny this. Neither did she confirm it.

"Then you disappeared," John Willie continued, "and I couldn't find you again."

To this she replied after a moment.—"I went back

to the house, and paid the Englishwoman, and then I came away. In the morning I arrive here."

"Do you mean you walked all night?"

"There is lit-tle night this time of the year."

John Willie was silent. Only a week before he had left an evening party at the "Imperial" to find the sun already burning a hole in the edge of Mynedd Mawr.

"And how much longer holiday have you?" John Willie asked presently.

"Six days," answered the girl; and again the numeral was accompanied by a slight gesture of her fingers.

"And then you go back to Liverpool?"

Complete silence was all the answer he had to that question.

Then, suddenly, Ynys moved. She stood up. For the first time her seaweed-coloured eyes looked straight into John Willie's.

"You left that place early. You will be hungry. I caught some fis-s — *brithyll*. I think she cooked now."

She disappeared round the corner of the hut.

John Willie would have liked to ask her why she had put on the black dress and the black shoes, but something seemed to whisper to him not to do so. No doubt she had caught the trout with her hand, in one of the pools of a stream that slid and chattered under fern down the side of Delyn, and he feared that did he approach her too suddenly even by words she might be off, even as those trout would have vanished in a flash at the least disturbance of the water by her hand. She had cooked them on the wood; she had also made a cake of flour and water and no salt; and she served the fish in a tin platter by the little clearing she had made for the hearth. He sat now, and she stood; she brought also a mug of milk, from the surface

of which she took a tiny caterpillar with the tip of a frond; and when he had eaten she cleaned the platter by scouring it with a handful of fern-rot and then setting it in a little stream with a stone upon it. Then they stood before one another again, he with his back to the hut, she in front of him, her head always superbly erect, but slowly turning from time to time, while her eyes sought the lake, the line of bracken against the sky where the mountain dropped, and his own eyes, indifferently.

Then, unexpectedly, she asked a question.

"You come to fis-s?" she asked.

He said that he had thought of it.

"There is wa-ter in the boat, but indeed I not touch it. I go and empty it," she said.

But he stopped her.—"Oh, it's no good now — too bright," he said. "Might try in the evening. Sit down, won't you? I want to ask you some questions."

She curled herself up in the bracken, and he set his back against the wall of the hut and began to fill his pipe.

But instead of questioning her, John Willie had all the appearances of a man who was questioning himself. He sat a little behind Ynys, so that when she looked straight before her he lost her full profile; and he moved no more than she. He was suddenly thinking how thoroughly sick he was of Llanyglo.

For if he had helped to make Llanyglo, and knew its lighting and its watering, its building and its leases and its subsoil, Llanyglo had also helped to make him. The drub-drub on the Pier, the inanities of his friend Percy Briggs, evening parties that began at midnight and ended with the sun high in the sky, complaints from his sister that she saw him only in the short in-

tervals between a coming home and a setting out again — this had been pretty much the reaction of Llanyglo on John Willie Garden. He was a very ordinary young man.— But here was a world peopled only by sheep, the myriad insects that hopped and wove and chirruped in the tall fern, the kites and curlews overhead, and the trout far below the surface of the lake. His lashes made rainbows before his half-closed eyes, and those eyes, opening again, could gaze at the tips of the sunny fern against the deeps of the sky until the difference between them became almost as intensified as the difference between dark and bright. Spiders no bigger than freckles seemed to be doing important things under their bright green roofs — for only the under sides of the fronds were green and translucent: the fern on which the sun beat directly was no more green than Ynys's hair was black. . . . And the sunny parts of Ynys's arms were of the colour of a hayfield with much sorrel, while the round beneath was as cool as the under curve of a boat on the water. . . .

It would have been part of the peace of that hot midday could he have dozed with his head in the crook of that arm.

Of other desire to break its peace had he none.

And Ynys?

She had seen those fretted parasols of the fern, meshed and lacy and interpenetrating, a vast rug of whispering frondage — she had seen them, or their like, since they had been no more than tender, uncurling pastoral staffs, brown, with tiny inner crocketts not even green yet. She had watched them unfold their weak fingers — yes, from Lord Street, Liverpool, she had watched them unroll as a soft caterpillar unrolls. In a cool and darkened shop, with the floor always wet,

she had seen, with those seaweed-coloured eyes, not the great queenly hydrangeas, nor the burning torches of the gladioli, nor the fat and scentless roses, nor the great half-pint pitchers of the arum lilies — she had seen, not these cold grandiflora, but the celandine and anemone of the hedge-bottoms, and the cool pennywort on the rocks, and the soft and imperceptible change, day by day, of those mountains many, many railway stations away. Those other great robed and wedding-dressed blooms? She had not considered them to be flowers. Flowers were the sappy bluebells she had pulled, white-stalked and squeaking, from the banks, receiving a penny for them — but not in exchange. She had sold the hydrangea-things without even seeing them. And her own weekly fifteen shillings of wages had not purchased a single glance of her eyes nor a single emotion of her heart.

And her eyes had not distinguished less between magnificent bloom and magnificent bloom than they had between this and the other collar, tie, and bowler hat who, his purchase made, had lingered, and had tried to talk to her, and had come again. Young women who can see Delyn from Liverpool can hardly be expected so to distinguish. These young men had not even been, as the balls and buckets of Howell Gruffydd's shop-window had been, beyond her reach, she below theirs. She and they might breathe the same air, but they extracted different elements from it.

Was that true also of herself and John Willie Garden, lying now among the fern of Delyn — John Willie, whose clothes (even) were what they were by a kind of artifice, and not, like Dafydd Dafis's, as if the cropped grasses themselves had by some natural alchemy become wool, and the wool clothing, that would be

worn out by labour not far from the grasses again? . . .

Because he did not know, John Willie lay there, and watched her cheek and arm, and forgot that he had said he was going to ask her questions.

The silence lasted for so long that, when at last he spoke, she might (he thought) have supposed that he had had a nap in the meantime. He hoisted himself to his feet, stretched himself, yawned "Ah, that's better!" and then added, "I say, you might show me where you got those fish."

Instantly, a gillie incongruously in a flower-seller's dress, she was on her feet and walking a little ahead. But he caught her up and kept abreast of her. They reached the boat, half in and half out of the gravelly shallow, but she went straight on across a swampy little stream that led to the upper margin of the lake. Presently it seemed to John Willie that they would have done better to take the boat, for they had to skirt a deep shaly spur the slope of which continued unbroken down under the water and gave under their feet the moment they tried to ascend it. At a point where she splashed a few yards ahead of him John Willie suggested that they should take their boots and stockings off, and he had a momentary fancy that the brown of her cheek deepened a little; but she made no reply, and they kept on. Then, after more hundreds of yards of walking and wading, they gained firm earth again. They were at the bottom of a V-shaped ravine into which all the trees and scrub of the mountain-sides seemed to have settled. It was known to a few shepherds as Glyn Iago, and the stream came down it over jagged stairs of purple slate and under dwarf-oak and birch, thorn and briar and mountain-ash.

Again it would have been better to wade through

the noisy shallows and round the boulders spongy with drenched moss, and again he suggested it; but perhaps the deep gurgle of the fall they were approaching drowned his voice. He went ahead, putting aside the worst of the brambles, and he knew without telling when they reached the pool. It was long enough to have plunged into, too wide to have leapt across even had the rocks afforded any take-off, and it deepened gradually to blackness, and then boiled pale and tumultuous again under the plunge of a twelve-foot fall. Over the pool itself the sunlight glowed in spots only through the leaves, but on one bank there was a sunny clearing of a few yards square. Then the trees began again, up and up and up to the sky, a cliff of leaves that shut the mountains out and the stream in.

He let her sit down first. This she did where she could see the little plants and mosses at the water's edge endlessly a-quiver with the tumult of the fall. Then, sitting down beside her, he again felt that he must begin talking to her all over again. His mouth flickered for a moment as he thought of Percy Briggs on the Pier, and then he spoke.

"If I were you I should move up here," he said.

She was picking up a snail-shell to throw into the water. She turned, extraordinarily quickly, and in the seaweed eyes there was a hard and defensive look, instant, yet old.

"It iss only my hat and my box," she said quickly.

"Eh? Oh!——" He laughed. "I only mean there'll be brakes and wagonettes all over the place now, and anybody might come to the lake.—I say, you didn't think I meant to chuck you out, did you?"

"I thought prapss you want to fiss," she replied, turn-

ing away and looking at the gasogene of black water again.

He laughed again.—“Oh, no. I mean you don't sleep there, and nobody'd come here, and I could get you a lock and key so that your things would be safe. You could go there if it rained.

She tossed the snail-shell into the water, neither accepting his offer nor rejecting it.

“Besides,” he went on, “I know that if anybody disturbed you you'd be off. Look here. I'll get you that lock and key. I'm off back to-night, and I'll bring 'em up to-morrow.— But you will be here won't you?”

Again — he could not be sure — he fancied her colour deepened.

“Hwhere should I go to?” she said over her shoulder.

“Well — anywhere — Liverpool — anywhere.”

And again her reply was to gaze at the boiling of the air-bubbles at the foot of the fall.

But John Willie no longer wondered that he should struggle thus with a conversation when there were rills and rivulets of talk waiting for him at home at Llanyglo. She was not mute; there were a thousand communications wrapped up in her very presence. She ran over with unspoken meanings, babbled for all her silence. Her hair, nearly all cool green now, as the black water was cool green; that unlearned balance of her head; the curve of her cheek; those lovely, despotic forearms — whether that least member of her whole sweet parliament, her tongue, moved or was still, there was more of approach in all of these than in June's “Fancy! Do tell me! And how's So-and-So getting on?” These were the weeds, the dusty groundsel of words; Ynys was her own vocabulary, every part of her a part of speech. . . .

And the theme? The theme that every corpuscle of her announced as she sat there, listlessly tossing snail-shells and twigs and rolled-up leaves and blades of grass into the water?

John Willie was a very ordinary young man. In Liverpool, his eyes would have seen very little but Liverpool. Perhaps that was why, in Glyn Iago, he had not the perfect freedom of sun and air, of growing and dying things, and things growing again, of moving water, of that essential speech with this creature at his side that at the last has no need of words. For, for good and ill mingled, they make shames and fears in the Liverpools of the land, and codes, and suppressions, and the apparatus of Conscience, and it is too late for you, too late for me, too late for John Willie, to un-make them. John Willie had begun by questioning Ynys; now, far more searchingly, Ynys was questioning him.

And the end of her questioning of him was that he would have called himself a cur had he as much as thought of not doing "the decent thing. . . ."

Indeed it was precisely because he thought so resolutely and intently of doing that thing that by and by he rose. It was only half-past four; he could be home in two, or two-and-a-half hours; and for that matter he was not in any hurry to get home. He was in a hurry now only because Ynys spoke too much. She gave him no rest from her close inquisition. He must answer those questions that she so pressed home or take himself quickly off, to add (as he knew) the fuel of thought to that flame with which he already burned.

Therefore, again standing by her, he asked her one more question only.

“You will be here to-morrow?” he said, his eyes anxiously on her face.

What his answer would have been had she said “No,” or had he not believed that nod of her head, it is useless to ask.

He left her still tossing the debris into the water.

He began to be aware of the change the Wakes people had wrought in Llanyglo before the trap had carried him a mile along the road. Twice in that distance he had to whip up to get through the dust of vehicles ahead. He had been right in saying that the landaus and brakes and wagonettes would be all over the place now. They were taking the family parties back to dinner at the hotels.

Then, still five miles from Llanyglo, he began to allow the brakes and wagonettes to overtake him again. He had remembered that he was in no hurry. Hurry would only mean the crowd sooner, the noise sooner, and supper sooner, with the conversation of June and Minetta. At a place called Doll he turned aside into a narrow lane that would take him by a circuitous route into the Porth Neigr road near the stone quarries. Then, sitting sideways on the seat, with his head sunk and the whiplash trailing over the dashboard, he allowed the horse to take him at its own pace.

Of course, he could marry Ynys; there was nothing to be said against that except that hitherto he had not thought of marriage. Marriage, in John Willie's observation of his married friends and acquaintances, was a quite definite and circumscribed thing, in which prospects played a part, and settlements, and houses of a certain kind, and certain well-marked changes in

the bride's demeanour towards her still unmarried friends, and a certain tendency to stoutness and baldness on the part of the groom. Moreover, behind every suggested marriage there lurked the question whether it "would do." His father and mother, when he came to speak of marriage, would want to know whether it would "do"; Minetta would have her opinion about whether it would "do"; and if it did not "do," all his friends and acquaintances would by and by shake their heads and say that it had been plain all along how *that* would turn out. . . .

On the other hand, the case was complicated — not in principle (that was beastly clear) — but by allowances in practise. Llanyglo had for some time been far from exacting; it was now, in certain of its phases, at any rate, almost exacting in the opposite direction. As many social allowances were made for the young man who had something "on" as liberties were granted to properly affianced couples who had got their certificate that it would "do." Percy Briggs would have gone off alone, with his hat on the back of his head and cheerfully whistling, at the least hint that John Willie had something "on." . . . But this that had come so suddenly and overmasteringly over John Willie was a different thing altogether. Here was not somebody who played a game of which the rules and forfeits were known. That game, under one veiling or another, might form the staple of the Lunas' Drawing-room Entertainment at the Palace, or of the songs of Miss Sal Volatile in the Pavilion on the Pier; but Ynys had not even known what she had turned her back on when she had stood under the raspberry-coloured light, looking out at the gathering darkness of sky and the still linger-

ing gleam on the sea. Warned probably, not by hearing and sight, but by some apprehension more sensitive still, she had stayed to see that orange rising, and then, before it had become a setting again, had been far on the road to Delyn. . . .

Suddenly John Willie sat up and shook the reins.

"No, damn it," he said.

He began to bowl more briskly along the hilly lanes.

It was after eight o'clock when he reached the quarry, and then for a time he had to go carefully down the by-lane that the stone-carts had deeply scored. But on the Porth Neigr road he whipped up again. Hearing a sound behind him, he drew in; and when there had passed him a great brake hung all over with Chinese lanterns and full of people singing, the spell of silence under which he had lain all day was broken. Thereafter sound merely succeeded sound. As he took the railway bridge, a "special" roared past below, carrying more people to Llanyglo; and before its red tail-lights had mingled with the other rubies and emeralds of the line he had come upon the first couple turning at the limit of their walk. Then came a large board with "Imperial Hotel" on it, then a new horse-trough; then benches, then walls with placards on them. A mile ahead lay the golden corona of the town. This began to break up into single lights and groups of lights, and then, at a turn, he saw the Wheel and the jewelled finger of the Pier. He could hear the noise, an indistinguishable something in the air that was not the wind and not the sound of the sea; and then at the first roadside lamp it seemed suddenly to become night. More slowly he rounded Pritchard's Corner; at the tram terminus the belated shopkeepers made a press about the

Promenade-Pontnewydd Street car; and from the open doors of the "Tudor Arms" was wafted the smell of beer.

Delyn and Glyn Iago were part of the night behind him.

He did not attempt to drive through the crowd that suddenly thickened about the middle of Pontnewydd Street, where half the road was being taken up. One of the "Imperial" ostlers took the horse's head, said "All right, Mr. Garden," and John Willie descended and walked. On the balconies of the "Grand" and "Imperial," people stood and watched the stream that descended to the Front. From the Kursaal Gardens came a noise that presently the ear ceased to hear, so steady and monotonous was it. Then, walking in the wake of a tram that moved slowly forward among the street barriers with an incessant clanging of its bell, John Willie reached the Promenade.

It was thrice the width of Pontnewydd Street, and so there was more room; but for all that it was difficult to walk at more than the general pace. This, nevertheless, football-packs of young men attempted from time to time to do, breaking their way through. They played mouth-organs, and at moments, apparently without plan or premeditation, suddenly formed into rings, feet pattering in clog-steps, eyes fixedly on those same feet, their backs a fence to hold back the spectators, while in the middle a couple of young men or a young man and a young woman danced. Then, as suddenly as they had stopped, they were off again, arms linked in arms or locked about the waist in front, each figure a vertebra of a many-jointed onward-rushing snake. Under the Promenade lamps they advanced, everybody else yielding place as they came. The little rail-enclosed plots

that lay between the pavements and the hotels were magpied with torn paper and strown with lying figures. They lay there, in meaningless embrace, moaning long harmonies in thirds, hats decorated with penny gauds, eating nuts and "rock" and chocolate, hardly moving when passers-by all but strode over them. Probably they were discussing nothing more than "So I said to her, straight to her face——" or the conduct of the shed-overlooker where they worked throughout the year together and if the passers-by almost trod on them, they, in return, half absently flirted the passing ankles with whisks and penny canes.

But if these lay like bivalves, torpid and content, another and more active element had awoke in the throng. The Alsations, had they required it, were put into countenance now. One felt that they veined and threaded the mass with something that worked as quietly and as rapidly as yeast. They fed on it, drawing from it at last an open and confirmed sanction for all those things they would not have dreamed of doing at home. One met them here and there in couples, or in couples of couples with the invisible link between each pair of couples drawing ever farther and farther out, the women with shawls and hoods and dominoes over their dinner attire, the men with restless eyes, quick to show by a touch of hand or elbow that avoidance was desirable or a glance of complicity no harm. Lamps showed these gestures of understanding between those who could not have sworn to one another's names. Of the two solitudes, that of the mountain-top and that of this press where ribs could hardly lift, they sought and found the second. Perhaps—who knows?—they were even grateful to those others who moaned those gummy thirds stretched on the lamplit grass. . . .

And scarce two hundred yards away, under the railings of the sea-wall, here and there a mask, with struggling breast and tightly shut eyes and writhing lips, prayed. . . .

As John Willie pushed at the garden gate, the door at the other end of the path opened and closed again behind Minetta and June. He met them in the middle of the path and asked them where they were going. When they said they were only going for a stroll he ordered them back. Minetta's "*Oh* — how you startled us! — why, we didn't know you were coming back ——" suggested that she thought her brother might have spoken in another tone; but John Willie was not thinking of tones. He was thinking that perhaps after all he had no business to be spending days up Delyn just at present. A stroll with him to take care of them — well and good; but not two girls alone. . . . He said so, rather curtly, in the dining-room as Minetta got him some supper; but Minetta made no reply. Again she was thinking that June was a very nice girl, but it was odd that she should twice have brought her brother back from his fishing like this.

John Willie, eating his supper almost savagely, had some ado to reply politely to June's rills of pretty speech. He wondered now why she should talk when she had nothing whatever to say. Only her tongue wagged, and he hardly heard his own tongue wagging in reply. *This* was not speech; *this* was not language! . . . "Not if I know it," he found himself suddenly thinking, as June asked him whether the Water Scheme had spoiled Delyn much, and said that she would like to go and see. But Minetta said little. She only asked John Willie one direct question. This was, Whether he had come back for good now. He replied that he didn't know, and

added some futility about fishing-weather and the difference a night sometimes made.

Minetta thought that the only extraordinary thing about his reappearance was that he should have troubled to go away at all.

June had one piece of information to give him, however. It was two days old, she said, but there — if John Willie *would* take himself off on his unsociable excursions like this he must expect to be a bit out of things. But she would forgive him, and tell him.— Ned Kerr was dead. It seemed (June said) that he had once given somebody in Porth Neigr a canary, and reports had reached him that the canary was not doing very well — had the pip or the croup or whatever it was canaries did have. He had worried a lot about the canary (June said), and, a week before, had been to Porth Neigr to see it. He had had a cold or something himself, June didn't know what; anyway, he had come back from seeing the canary and the next day hadn't got up. So his brother had sent for a doctor, and of course had told the doctor all about it — Ned, the canary, and all the lot. The doctor had said that *he* could see nothing the matter with Ned (which was more than some of them admitted, going on sending bottles of coloured water and so on and then a bill coming in for pounds and pounds), but Ned hadn't said anything at all — he'd just died at two o'clock in the morning. He might just as well have *had* something the matter with him, June said. And all about a stupid canary! —

Soon after that John Willie told them it was time they went to bed. He followed them upstairs himself a few minutes later.

But it was long before he slept. Perhaps he knew already in his heart that if he really meant that “Damn

it, no " he might as well stay at home now instead of leaving June and Minetta alone in the house. And he had meant it. He vowed he meant it still. The rusty light on his ceiling, cast from the corona outside, did not prevent his seeing the hut again — Glyn Iago — the black-dressed gillie who had tossed the snail-shells into the water; nor did the faint and harsh and ceaseless noise outside drown that powerful and wordless eloquence that he had heard with some faculty other than his bodily hearing. . . . Then the sounds grew thinner, yet louder also; fewer, but clearer in the growing silence of the night. He heard a long-drawn strain of tipsy song, the tinny thread of sound of a mouth-organ, and then a clock striking three. . . .

But he must go up to Delyn on the morrow. It would be a rotten thing to tell a girl to be sure to be there and then not to turn up himself.

And he would take her that lock and key.

IV

AN ORDINARY YOUNG MAN

HE began to spend his days up Delyn and his nights at Llanyglo. To avoid the shaly spur, he pulled across in the boat each morning from the beaching-place near the hut to the foot of Glyn Iago, and she had his breakfast ready for him when he arrived, which was between half-past ten and eleven o'clock. As if his suggestion had been a command, she had made her little encampment up the Glyn, fetching dry sticks from up the steep wood; her hat and her box only remained in the locked shed.

He did not cast a fly. Minetta began to ask him, when he returned at night, first what sport he had had, and then why he always chose to fish in the middle of the day. Then one night he returned to find his sister showing June her sketches. For some minutes he affected not to be interested; then, with a highly elaborate yawn, he said, "Oh, I say, Min — what became of that sketch you once made of that gipsy kid — you remember — the one mother once took in with a cut foot? — Best thing she ever did," he added carelessly to June.

"Oh, it got shoved away somewhere. Why?" said Minetta; but there was a little quick dropping look in her eyes.

"Nothing. I just happened to remember it. It was better than some of these."

The next morning the sketch, unearthed from some

dusty heap or other, was on his plate when he came down to breakfast. Presently June and Minetta also came down. By that time he was able to say, quite composedly, "Oh, I see you found that thing. That's the sketch I was speaking of, June——"

But he wondered whether Minetta also could by any chance have seen Ynys on that, her single night in Llanyglo.

One rapidly advancing trouble was on his mind. He had not spoken to Ynys of the passing of her holiday, but he himself could almost hear its seconds ticking away. Soon two days only remained; the morrow, when he would see her on Delyn again, would be the eve of her departure. She had told him that she had taken a return ticket; already he seemed to hear the whistle of the train by which it was available. She could take that train either at Llanyglo or at Porth Neigr.

On the morning of her last whole day he ascended the Glyn and found, as usual, his trout cooked for him and keeping hot between two plates. He ate it abstractedly. Again Minetta had remarked pointedly on his lack of fishing-luck, but it was not that that was troubling him. He was wondering, not for the first time, what explanation Ynys gave herself of his untouched rods and buckled fly-book, and whether she too thought it unusual that he should come so far merely to lie by the stream with her hour after hour, or else, with a "Shall we go up there?" to ascend the stream, skirt the wood, gain the open mountain-side, and toil for half an hour to the summit. He had substituted no other pretence for his first pretence of fishing. What did she think of it? Or did she not think of it at all?

Again that morning, when she had scoured the plates and set them in a little rocky basin by the quivering

moss, he proposed the mountain climb. In half an hour they were at the top. It was a plateau of volcanic rock, with scrubs of hazel, and bents and reeds and harebells ceaselessly stroked by the wind. Behind them, as they sat down under a rock, only Mynedd Mawr rose higher than they; below them Llyn Delyn lay like a bit of grey looking-glass set in its little mile-long cleft. They had raised other bits of looking-glass, too, in other far-off clefts. About them the mountains rolled as if invisible giants were being tossed in the visible blankets of the land. On the left only, far from Llanyglo, a scratch of silver showed that the sea was there.

"So you're off to-morrow," he said, when they had lain long. He did not hide from himself the ache the words caused him.

"My tick-ket say to-morrow," she answered, without emotion.

He muttered something foolish about an extension.—
"But I suppose they wouldn't keep your place open," he answered himself hopelessly.

Her next words caused him a marvellous pang of lightness and hope.

"I think-k I not go back," she said, the seaweed eyes looking at that far-off silver scratch that was the sea.

Why did that pang at which he had winced instantly become another pang, at which he winced no less? What was it that the eyes of his spirit saw, far, far, farther off than her seaweed ones saw the sea? Her decision to stay, if she really meant that she would stay, should have meant the continuance of his happiness; what, then, should change it into something like an unhappiness and a fear?

He did not know. He was only an ordinary young man. He only knew that over that moment, which

should have been one of a care removed, a faint shadow of an irremovable care already impinged.

He had sat up, and was looking at her.—“ You mean — that you won't go back at all ? ” he said.

“ Indeed I think I cannot go back,” she answered ; and her imperfect speech left it uncertain whether indeed she meant that she was still unresolved, or whether to her, who had not been able to endure a night in Llanyglo, a return to Liverpool would be more than she could bear.

“ But — but — what would you do ? ” he asked.

“ I stay here lit-tle longer, and then I get wick-ker from Dafydd Dafis, and mend chairs, like my mother.”

“ But — but ——— ” It was so new to his experience. “ You mean you'd just go from place to place ? ”

“ If I go to Liverpool I die,” she answered.

John Willie, torturing himself over this long afterwards, could never decide what that subtle yet essential change was that came over their relationship from that moment. It was quite contrary to any change that might have been expected. But for that sullen “ No, damn it,” he might have been conscious of hardier impulses as the term of her holiday approached ; but very curiously, it was now that he learned that it had no term that he felt those hardier stirrings. It was exactly as if, with little time to spare, he had wasted time, and now, with time enough before him, he must lose no time. Perhaps it was also that growing wonder what she must think of fishing expeditions without fishing.

Or — or — could it be that that sweet clamour of her person had all along shown patient intention, and that he, he only, had been dull ? . . .

But, more quickly than he had thought of charging

her with this — (he was only an ordinary young man) — he had to acquit her again. Certainly she had not decided not to leave because, staying, she saw him daily. She merely dreaded towns and disliked those over-glorious waxen cenotaphs that were raised to the memory of the humble flowers she knew. And he was still sure that at an unguarded movement from him she would have fled days ago. At an unguarded movement she would fly now. He had what he had only on the condition that, by comparison with his hunger, it was and must remain nothing. . . . What then? Must he come, and still come, until the wraiths of the mists began to drive over a dead and sodden Delyn, and those tossing blankets of the mountains became hidden in rain, and the wood of Glyn Iago became brown and thin, and the stream an icy torrent, and Llanyglo itself as empty as a piece of old honeycomb?

He did not know, nor did he know how, without risking all, to ascertain.

Yet know he must; and in that moment, forgetting his "Damn it, no," he contrived as if by accident to touch her hand. But he was none the wiser for doing so. As his hand moved with intent, hers moved innocently; her fingers began to pull to pieces the little yellow flower she had plucked; and he had not the courage to essay it twice.

Nor did he, his broodings notwithstanding, find that courage again that day. The sun crept round; tiny Llyn Delyn far below began to shine with an amethyst light; and a quietude filled the heavens above and the land beneath, so that the rolling mountains seemed to be no longer the tossing of giants, but rather as if the giants, their tumbling game ended, had crept under the blankets and had gathered them about their heads and

shoulders for the night. The sea and sky became a shining golden bloom of air. They descended to the Glyn again. There they ate a packet of sandwiches which John Willie had brought, and then he rose and stood, irresolute. He must go, he must go. . . . She was setting her stick-heap in order; her plain black dress, that showed off Philip Lacey's superfatted flowers, was an anomaly by the side of the Delyn twigs. . . .

"Nos da," he said.

If the face she lifted had not been glorious, his thoughts of it would now have made it so.

"Nos da," she replied. . . .

If he still said "No," it was not with the sturdy expletive now. Chiefly he now feared to risk and fail.

He left abruptly.

He drove to Llanyglo that night with a brassy sunset on his left that sank to the colours of dying dahlias as mile succeeded mile; and this time he did not turn into the winding lanes that led to the quarry. From the main road to which he kept he could see Llanyglo's corona three miles away. But it moved him now, not to the revulsion and distaste of a week ago, but only to a careless contempt. Some aroma seemed to have passed away from his dreamings. For the first time, he felt himself to be an ordinary young man returning from the mountains where he had something "on." This new slight bitterness extended even to his thoughts about the perspicacious Minetta. Be hanged to Minetta. If Minetta overstepped the mark he would very quickly tell her to mind her own business. He had to pull himself out of his moroseness and to remind himself that she had not done so yet.

As he passed along the Pontnewydd Street he did not

at first notice the diminution in the number of people usually to be seen there at that hour. Nor, as he sank into his reverie again, did it immediately strike him that the greater number of the people on the Promenade were hurrying in one direction — the direction of the Trwyn. But he entered the dining-room at home in time to find June and Minetta scrambling hastily through their supper. All the dishes had been laid on the table at once, and their shawls were cast in readiness over the backs of chairs. This time he deemed it prudent not to raise any opposition to their plans, whatever these had been. Instead, he drew up his own chair.

“Off out?” he remarked. “Well, I hurried back to take you somewhere. Just let me swallow something, and then I’ll come with you. What’s up?”

In telling him what was “up” Minetta seemed to make the most of some advantage she apparently fancied herself to possess. If he had only glanced at the newspapers, she said, instead of rushing off the moment he’d bolted his breakfast, he’d have known what was “up.” It had been “up” in Llanyglo that afternoon — such a crowd as never was, and Eesaac Oliver was to preach in the Floral Valley again that night.

“Unless he changes his mind,” Minetta added. “Of course it’s part of it all that he doesn’t make arrangements. He’ll stop in the middle of a walk and begin to preach just where he is, and then at other times, when they’ve made all ready for him and everybody waiting, he’s praying in his bedroom or something and nobody dares go near him. So they never really know till he begins. There’s only one thing he won’t do ——”

“Eesaac Oliver?” John Willie began, puzzled. “Wait a minute ——”

Then, as Minetta once more tossed her head, he remembered. Of course. The Revival. . . .

And what he did not remember he did not, in the circumstances, choose to ask his sister. It would only be giving her another opportunity to comment on his remarkable absences. He remembered much. He remembered those rumours of the great spiritual thing that had broken out at Aberystwith, had then rolled tumultuously up the coast to Barmouth, and thence to Harlech and Portmadoc, and thence up the sky-high steeps of Ffestiniog, and through the folds of those tossed blankets west into Lleyn. He remembered — yes, he remembered now that his eyes were turned outward from himself and his own affairs again — the preachings of Eesaac Oliver on the bare mountain-sides, and his fastings among the rocks, and his baptisms in rivers, and his liftings-up of his voice on the outskirts of towns that had presently emptied to hear him, and his calling on folk to turn from the wickedness of their ways while there was yet time, for the Day of Judgment was at hand. He remembered these things because at the time he had thought them rather one in the eye for the Howell Gruffydds and the John Pritchards who, when the Council came to debate such delicate but profitable subjects as licencing and mixed bathing, had tactfully allowed themselves to be represented by the soft closing of the door behind them. He knew what that interrupted sentence of Minetta's meant, "There's only one thing he won't do ——" The only thing that Eesaac Oliver would not do was to preach within the stone walls of their new Chapels. He held these bazaar-supported buildings to be defiled, their Baptist temples places out of which the traffickers in money and doves must be driven with scourges. It mattered not that

John Pritchard was a pillar, Howell his own father. "He that loveth father and mother more than Me ——" He would preach as the mighty Wesley preached, from wall-tops, from the boulders of the stony places, from the wheelbarrow, from the milking-stool, from the saddle. He would journey and preach, and journey and preach again, four, six times a day. There was a Door which, entering by it, gave his instant and flaming Theme — the Door open to Llanyglo itself unless it would sink, it and its Kursaals and its Big Wheels, its Lunas' Entertainments and its bivalves lying under the lighted lamps on the public grass-plots, its Alsatians and its greedy Chapel-goers, its harlotry and its cupidity and its bright sin and its blasphemy of the Name, into the pit where it must be destroyed.

"Oh, *do* hurry up!" said Minetta impatiently. . . .

Ten minutes later they were hastening along the half-empty Promenade.

The Floral Valley was no longer as it had been when Philip Lacey had plotted it out so neatly with his pair of compasses and coloured it with his geranium and lobelia and golden feather. At its upper end, a Switch-back now humped itself like a multiple dromedary, and clear across it, from a staging on one side to a staging on the other, was swung the cabled apparatus known as an Aerial Flight. Philip's bandstand still occupied the middle, but the rest, save for a few outlying dusty beds, was as barren as a gravel playground. The Valley had held five thousand people on the occasion of the Brass Band Contest; that night it held and overflowed with thrice five thousand. Half-way up the ascending path that led to it John Willie Garden saw that there was no approach from that quarter; there was nothing for it but to take to the slippery grass and the darkness,

avoiding the bivalves open and the bivalves shut, and struggling as best they could to the crest. There, with an arm about each of them, he led them through the slowly moving outer circle of people who struck matches and laughed and occasionally craned their necks forward to look over the dense mass in front. By degrees they gained the ring where, if little was to be seen, a word now and then could be heard; and thereafter, by losing no chance of wriggling forward, they reached a point from which they could see the bandstand.

A ladder ran up to its roof, and up this ladder Eesaac Oliver and two other men had climbed. The bight of a rope had been passed about Eesaac Oliver's body, its ends running round the gilded spike that crowned the flat eight-sided pyramid; and the men who crouched on the slope varied the tether as Eesaac Oliver moved this way and that round the octagonal gutter. The trapeze of the Flight hung motionless in the air above him; the shrieking Switchback had stopped; and the slight white figure, so precariously perched, turned to all sides of the vast speckled bowl about him.

"See who that is, at the right hand rope?" John Willie whispered to June. He still had an arm about either of their waists, and he fancied that June pressed a little closer to him.

"No. Who?" she whispered back.

"Tudor Williams. Expect he couldn't get out of it. He made a speech the other day, all about Young Wales, a regular dead set at them, and he'll sweep the poll after this. I don't know who the other is.— Listen, he's turning this way now ——"

Eesaac Oliver's voice came across the packed still basin.

“Cry aloud — spare not — lift up your voice like a trumppp-pet! I say to you young men, and I say to you young women, that this cit-ty by the sea shall not be spared, no, no more than the cit-ties of the plain were spared! It smells of corrup-tion; it is an offence in the nostrils of God! There is more sin packed into it than there is drops of blood in your bodies, and more wick-kedness, and more fornication, and more irreligion. And those who should help, do they help? Indeed they do not! They fill their pock-kets instead! I tell them, their own souls go, perhaps this night, into the pock-kets of Hell! Aw-w-w, their bazaars prof-fit them lit-tle there! Their new Chap-pils prof-fit them lit-tle there! Their funds, and their balance-sheets, and their foundation-stones with their names on them, prof-fit them lit-tle there! — But I say to you young men, and you young women, that the Wa-ter of Life is free. Come now, come now! Do not say, ‘I will sin one more sin and then repent’ — perhaps you be taken away before that sin iss commit-ted ——”

He turned again, and his voice became less clear.

Perhaps John Willie and his charges were well where they were, high on the rim of the basin. Whether with the pressure of those behind, or with the swelling of their own emotion, many below were moaning softly, and one or two small and hushed commotions seemed to be centres of fainting. The inner ring, close to the bandstand, was hatless; the belt above them was packed so that it would have been impossible to remove a hat; and always about the uppermost circle matches twinkled in and out. Again Eesaac Oliver’s voice was heard, as if borne upon a wind:

“— he that loveth father and mother more than Me ——”

“Is his father here?” June whispered to John Willie. . . .

Howell was at his own home, surrounded by sympathetic neighbours. Sunk into his arm-chair, he sobbed. Big John Pritchard tried to console him, but he was inconsolable. He shook with his emotion.

“My own flesh and blood!” he sobbed. “To turn from his parents, that fed him, and clothed him, and sent him to the Coll-idge, and gave him allowance of twenty-six pounds a quarter, and bring him up in the fear of God! Oh, oh! — John Pritchard, give me a drink of water if you please. — And to call his father and mother sinful pip-ple! Indeed, Hugh Morgan, you are happy you have no children! They know better than you always; indeed the ’orld go on at a great rate, we get so wise! And the Chap-els burdened with debt! There is half a dozen Chap-els for him to preach in, but he say the highways and the hedges is his Chap-pil! . . . Look you, he not even come home. I meet him in the street, I, his father; and I say to him, ‘Eesaac Oliver,’ I say, ‘if you will not preach in the Chap-pils, then you preach in that field on the Sarn road; you get crowds of pip-ple; it is a big field, and will hold crowds of pip-ple.’ But he turn away, indeed he turn his back on his own father! . . . Look you: If he preached in that field, they find their way to that field, look you, all those pip-ple — they learn the way to that field as well as they learn the way to the sta-tion — and the Chap-el buy it cheap — oh, oh! . . . By and by that field be worth ten bazaars — oh, oh! . . . Blodwen, if the gas is lighted upstairs I think I go to bed — the things that were good enough for his father and

mother are not good enough for him — this is a heavy day ——”

John Pritchard and Hugh Morgan helped him up the stairs to bed.

June, Minetta, and John Willie left the valley before Eesaac Oliver descended from the bandstand. As they walked along the now rather more crowded Promenade Minetta seemed to be in livelier spirits; she chattered with June; but John Willie was morose again. Again he was wondering what would have happened had Ynys not chanced to pick a flower at the moment when his hand had moved imperceptibly towards hers. He saw her again, bending over the stick-heap and looking up as she gave him that expressionless “Nos da.” By this time she was probably asleep, asleep far away up that Glyn, with the deep plunge of the fall for her lullaby, the stars for her night-lights, and the sun over the wood-edge for her alarum in the morning. Before the noises of Llanyglo should awaken him, she would be lying flat on the bank, taking trout for his breakfast.

And, again and ever again, he wondered whether, had that attempted touch of his not miscarried, she would have been off as the trout would have been off at the falling of her shadow on the water. . . .

For one moment, just before he went to sleep, he seemed to hear Eesaac Oliver’s voice again:

“Do not say, ‘I will sin one more sin and then repent’— perhaps you will be taken away before that sin is committed ——”

Then he slept, brokenly, waking at intervals to mutter “Damn it ——” and to think of her again where she lay, far up Glyn Iago.

V

THE DWELLING OF A NIGHT

JOHN WILLIE began to spend his days up Delyn and his nights elsewhere than at Llanyglo. He too passed them under the night-lights of the stars — for if she could go to bed by those candles, so could he. On the first night on which he did not return to Llanyglo they peeped down on him where he lay, gazing at them, a mile and more over the head of Delyn, to the summit of which he had reascended after bidding her “Nos da” in the Glyn. On the second night he put another mile between herself and him, bathing in the morning in a brook the chilliness of which only a little refreshed him after his night’s tossing; he slept for three hours that afternoon, with her keeping watch by his side. And on the third night he lay among the fern, in her own old place behind Sharpe’s hut. She did not know that he did not return each night to that dusty town by the sea.

And now once again he was muttering to himself, fiercely and frequently, “No — no ——”

June’s stay began to draw to a close. Minetta suspected her of moping for John Willie, and told her that he often disappeared for days at a time like that. Sometimes, she added, he called it fishing.

“But he’d be fearfully annoyed if we went to look for him,” she said; and she turned away and smiled.

She smiled again when one morning June had a letter from Wygelia, with a postscript for herself. “*A bit of*

gossip for Minetta," the postscript ran. "Ask her if she remembers a girl from Llanyglo father took into one of his shops. He's thinking of sending out search-parties for her. She went off for a holiday, and hasn't turned up again ——" etc., etc., etc.

And so it was that John Willie, filled now with one thought only, came to miss quite a number of things that went down into the history of Llanyglo. He missed, for example, those first days of Revival in which the town, self-accused of sin, strove to purify itself. He missed that storm of impassioned evangelicalism in which Eesaac Oliver, walking one day on the Porth Neigr road, stopped at the foot of the lane that led to the quarries, suddenly threw up his hands, broke forth, and presently had the occupants of a dozen brakes and wagonettes listening to him in the great echoing excavation of the quarry itself. He missed, too, an odd little by-product of that gale of spiritual awakening — the black-faced group that one morning made its appearance on the beach, and resembled a troupe of ordinary seaside niggers until it broke, not into Plantation Melodies, but into hymns, one of which had a catchy pattering chorus that told over the names of the blest ones the redeemed would meet in Heaven:

*"There'll be Timothy, Philip and Andrew,
Peter, Paul and Barnabas,
James the Great, James the Less
And Bar-tholo-mew ——"*

He missed that other great storm of groans and fervour, when the pale young regenerator, mounting the railway embankment from a low-lying meadow near Porth Neigr, began to preach before sunset, preached until the stars came out, and then sent hysterical young

women and overstrung young men home in couples along the benighted lanes together, to comfort and enhearten and uplift one another as they went. . . . And he missed, among these and a multitude of other things, a certain rather famous exploit of his compatriot, Tommy Kerr.

He knew how Tommy had flouted and insulted Llanyglo, and how Llanyglo in return had long been looking for signs that Tommy was drinking himself to death. But neither John Willie Garden nor anybody else had thought of the alternative solution of the inconvenience of Tommy's presence in Llanyglo. This was, not that Tommy himself should fall one night and break his neck, but that something should happen to the house that, having been put up by the four brothers in a single night, was enjoyable by them as long as they or any of them should remain alive.

During Ned's illness, if that listless state in which he had moved between the accident to Harry and Sam and the death of the canary had been an illness, the care of the Hafod had fallen to Tommy; and that was as much as to say that it had been cared for very little. Moreover, the fabric itself was perhaps by this time impaired. The digging of the foundations of the hotels on either side of it had done it no good, and the constant vibration of the Pontnewydd Street trams had done it even less. On a certain Sunday morning, some weeks before the sickening of the canary, Tommy had taken it into his head to make a thorough examination of the place, while Ned had dozed in his chair. That examination had given Tommy a bad fright. Mounting a short ladder and looking up into the roof-space above the single living-room, he had found the loft far lighter than it ought to have been; but it had not been the gap in the

roof that had scared him so badly. It had been what he had seen through the gap — the chimney-stack all tottering, hooped out on one side like a barrel. . . .

With boards and baulks, an old pole-mast and other timbers from the unsightly little backyard, it had taken him the greater part of the day to shore the chimney up again.

Whew! He and Ned had been sleeping under *that!* —

It may be that there had been plotting against Tommy, too — or, if not actually plotting, a great deal of quiet watching to see what would happen, backed by a powerful desire that something should happen. Both Howell Gruffydd and John Pritchard were on the Roads Committee, and — well, it was obvious that Pontnewydd Street could not remain unrepaired merely because these Kerrs happened to live there. Orders had gone forth that its mains were to be seen to, pits had been dug in the street and barriers erected round them, and red flags set there by day and red lanterns by night.

Nothing had happened.

Then the excavations had been filled up again, and the road-metal carts had come. The surface was to be tackled. . . .

So it had been that John Willie Garden returning one night from Delyn, had seen Dafydd Dafis's road-engine drawn up for the night opposite the Imperial Hotel.

The engine had remained in Pontnewydd Street ever since.

It shook the Hafod as if it had been brought there expressly for its destruction. During the very first hour of its slow and ponderous passing backwards and forwards, Tommy's newly cobbled chimney had given

a not very loud crack, and, like a heavy sleeper, had settled down into a more comfortable shape. Tommy had come out, and had hailed the man who walked in front of the machine with a red flag. Nervously, almost politely, he had asked him how long they were likely to be. The man had replied that they had orders to "make a job of it." Then Tommy had seen Dafydd Dafis's face, watching him from the cab. . . . Half an hour later he had met Howell Gruffydd in the Marine Arcade. The Chairman of the Council had stopped. He had patted the shoulder of the common enemy gently with his hand, and his smile had been odiously affable.

"Well, Thomas Kerr," he had said, "how are you? I hear there is improvements at Plas Kerr; you have a grand road to your house soon, whatever! I think we have to assess you higher. How are you, Thomas Kerr?"

Kerr had hated the Welshman's fine, small, regular teeth. They were false, but by no means the falsest thing about his mouth. As he had made to move away Howell had continued.

"I hope Dafydd Dafis does not incommode you with the road-engine, Thomas Kerr? He has orders not to be a nuisance to the town. 'Drive as gently as you can, Dafydd Dafis' is his orders. . . . You are off to the Marine Hotel now, Thomas Kerr? Dear me, it is a curious fas-cin-ation such places have for some piple! Would it not be better to come to the Chapel on Sundays? . . . Thomas Kerr." (Tommy had been shuffling miserably away.) "Excuse me, Thomas Kerr, but you lose your handkerchief if you are not careful!"

And at this reminder that he had intended to button

up his pockets in the presence of his foe, Tommy had been wellnigh ready to weep.

And then Ned had died. . . .

There was a good deal of "edge," or vanity, or self-esteem, or conceit, or whatever you like to call it, about Tommy Kerr. He knew now that that road-engine would not be taken off as long as his crazy house stood, and he was stung and mortified that a few beggarly Welshmen, backed by a pettifogging Railway Company or two, with Kursaals Limited, a miserable District Council, a Pleasure Boats' Amalgamation, a few Hotel Syndicates and other such trifles, should be able to beat him. He felt very lonely without Ned. He would have liked to see Lancashire again, particularly Rochdale, his own town. He wanted to walk its hilly streets, and to see the Asbestos Factory again, and Hollingworth Lake. He would almost rather be found dead there than continue to live among these indigo mountains and pink hotels and chrome-yellow sands.

And so he set about his exploit.

At the very outset they tried once more to baulk him. For the thing that he intended to do certain timbers were necessary, and at six o'clock one night he passed, none too steadily, to a timber-merchant's, and gave an order to a clerk. The clerk smiled, and sent for his principal. Kerr pointed to various pieces in the yard. "Ye can send that — an' that — an' that t' other," he said thickly; "ye can get 'em out now — I'll fetch a cart." Then, looking at the builder's face, he saw that he too, like the clerk, was smiling. . . .

There was no need of words. Howell Gruffydd had been beforehand with him again. If one builder refused to sell to him, so, he knew, would all the others. He was wasting precious time with builders.

How many inns he had been to that day he could not have told, but he now felt the heart in him again. They thought they could dish Tommy Kerr like that, did they? Well, he would show them. . . . He lurched away to the "Lancashire Rose," in Gardd Street, and then crossed to the "Trafford." But at neither of them did he stay very long. He left the "Trafford" at a little after eight, three hours before he needed to have done so. He wanted those three hours. He also wanted all the hours he could get between then and sunrise.

No sober man would have dreamed of attempting it; but sobriety and large deeds do not always go hand in hand. Neither do large deeds and very clear thinking — which, stout hearts being commoner than unclouded brains, is lucky for us. Through Kerr's bemused head ran one thought and one thought only, namely, that the Hafod had been built by himself and his three brothers in a night — built in a night — built in a night —

If it had been built in a night it could be rebuilt in a night —

It had taken four of them to build it, but the rebuilding ought not to be nearly so heavy a job —

He would show them he did not come from Lancashire for nothing!

But before entering his dwelling that night he committed an act of theft. That damned road-engine had again been left drawn up opposite the Imperial Hotel, and Tommy, fumbling under the tarpaulin that covered it, stole something from the cab. He chuckled as he seemed to see again Dafydd Dafis's cat-like face looking at him round the fly-wheel. *He'd show Dafydd Dafis!* —

He entered his house and locked the door behind him.

He had formed no plan, but yet, somehow, he was conscious of a plan, and a reasonably clear one. Where it had come from he did not know; it was as if he heard again, somewhere in the air quite near, the voices of his brothers again, saying, in the loved Ratchet accents, "Never heed that, Sam — here's where th' strain comes — we'll do th' paperin' and put a pot o' geraniums i' th' window after." He saw these vital points and master-members of his plan as if they had been marked in his mind in red. He had not to stop to reason about them. He knew — dead Ned seemed to tell him — that the wall between the living-room and the scullery might stand. He knew — he seemed to have it from Sam — that the whole of the street-frontage was sound. The ends, near the two hotels, were the danger-points; most perilous of all was the main beam under the lately propped chimney. The chimney must be taken down first of all. "To lighten th' beam, ye see," Harry's voice seemed to sound; "nay, donnot fiddle wi' it — shove it over into th' alley — we're pushed for time —"

So, whether you call it drink, or whatever you call it, Tommy did not set to work quite unassisted.

At the very beginning he almost came to grief. This was over the chimney, that essential member of the dwelling up whose throat the comfortable smoke had passed on that far-off morning as a token of habitation before the eyes of astonished little Llanyglo. He had climbed out on to the perilous roof and had begun to "study" how best to take it down; then, as cautiously he had unlashed and removed the baulks and the pole-mast, the chimney had suddenly thrust out its stomach at him. His heart gave a jump, and in a twink he had

set his back against it, grasping a rope to check his heave. . . . But the chimney would neither stand, nor yet fall as he wished it to fall, over the end of the Hafod into the side-alley. It wanted to fall inwards, over Tommy's head. He thought his agonised effort would never end. . . . But end it did. He felt the release of weight. The thing hung poised for a moment, and then. . . .

He was once more down in his kitchen before the windows which had been flung up in the two hotels had closed again. No doubt they had been waiting for days for that crash. They did not know that the scandalous Tommy himself had caused it. The ghost of a malicious smile crossed his face. "Sucks," he muttered, "for Gruffydd."

Then, at eleven o'clock at night, he fell to his house-breaking.

"Kerr?" said the author of the *Sixpenny Guide*, when asked about this. "I suppose you mean Tommy Kerr? Yes, I remember him.—His cottage? That Hafod Unos place?—Yes, it's perfectly true. He did pull it down or put it up again in one night, or at any rate something like it. An uncouth little animal he was; a drunken little beast; still, he did this. Made quite a job of it too.—How? That I can't tell you. But I saw the place the next morning, and it seems to me that at one time during the night both the ends and half the back must have been as open as an empty rick-shed. Of course the whole thing was altogether preposterous. Six men's work. I was staying a little farther up the road, and by daybreak there must have been a thousand people in Pontnewydd Street. Nobody lifted a finger. They just watched. He wasn't to be seen mostly; he

was busy inside; but when he did come out he never turned his head.— Sober? Impossible to say. And of course he didn't quite finish the job. But you've heard the rest."

The rest was as follows:

By three o'clock in the morning Tommy was neither drunk nor sober. He was a will and a piece of muscular apparatus, the two things quite separate, yet working together with never a jerk to mar the harmony. As a worn-out old machine will continue to run provided it is not interrupted, so Kerr worked, in a state to which the only fatal thing would have been to stop. The Tommy Kerr Llanyglo knew was a base thing, senseless as the lime and stone through which his chisel drove (with a fearful racket), obstinate as the beams under which he hammered his wedges; but this was another Tommy Kerr — somehow the name yet somehow another — a Kerr who might have been imagined to mutter, as he laboured, that it was a gradely night for a titanic act — that he came from Lancashire, where men did impossible things as a matter of course — and that if any Welshman would pocket his pride and ask him, he would pull down and put up again their whole blasted flashy town for them while he was about it.

And perhaps he was not really patching up his tottering cottage at all that night. Perhaps he was rather doing one of those useless and splendid things that alone among man's contrivances do not crumble and fall. Perhaps he was doing in his ruined Hafod pretty much the same thing that Eesaac Oliver Gruffydd did from bandstands and railway embankments and rocks and bedroom windows — setting up an ideal, and bidding men remember, though they might never attain, to strive.

Or perhaps he was working from the most religious motive known to man — to please himself, trusting that if he did so he might please Something greater than himself. If so, his idea might have had grandeur, but that grandeur was curiously expressed. For he did not cease to grunt from time to time, as his face became grimy and then washed clean again with perspiration: “Damned Treacle-tongue! I’ll *sew* my pockets up next time! Owd false-teeth — their road-engines — him an’ his new broolly! ——”

By four o’clock twenty road-engines could not have shaken down the beam on the chimney side of the house, and without another look at it he turned to the other wall. It was Ned’s remembered voice that bade him hasten. As he tackled the second beam he grew quite chatty with Ned. It was Ned who kept him to those red-marked crucial points, and told him that he needn’t bother about the walls, for the ceiling-sheets would do to cram into the interstices, and that, if he made haste, the golden days would come again when he had mocked at all Welshmen, and had had on the hip the Railway Companies and Kursaals and Hotels and Steamboats that had done their utmost to get rid of him.

It was soon after this that he became conscious of other whispers than Ned’s. At last he had seen the crowd gathered in Pontnewydd Street. But by this time he had ripped his ceiling-cloth down, and the grey incoming day was suddenly darkened again as he ploughed across the talus of debris and made a wall of cloth, fastening it anywise from beam to beam. Ned said that that was quite good enough. You never caught wise old Ned napping. Tommy Kerr had been very fond of his brother Ned. He had gone ratting

with him, and alder-cutting, and he remembered a whippet Ned had once had, a rare dog for nipping 'em as they turned, and a canary too. . . .

Then Tommy Kerr's brain, which for more than seven hours had been as steady as a sleeping top, gave a little wobble. This was as he paused in the middle of the floor of his incredible house. There was something else he had to do; what was it? . . . *What* was it, now? . . . He knew there was something else he had to do. . . .

He would have done better to begin his work all over again than to stop and think.

What . . . ah yes, he remembered! He remembered and chuckled. Why, he had been on the point of forgetting the cream of the whole joke! —

He stooped by the rounded grey mound of lime and plaster that represented his bed, but his knees gave, and he came with a little thump to the floor. But he rolled over on his side, and his fingers found what they sought, and after a few minutes he rose again. In his hand was the red flag he had stolen from the cab of Dafydd Dafis's road-engine. That was to go up where his chimney had been, that chimney that had emitted that first smoke on that far-off first morning. The town, when it awoke, must on no account miss *that*. Tommy Kerr wanted to see the faces of Howell Gruffydd, John Pritchard, Dafydd Dafis and Co. when they saw that flag. . . .

He tottered to the ladder that ran up into the loft.

He fell twice from the lower rungs of it, but a foot of lime made his fall soft. He mounted to the top, and crawled on his belly across the open rafters of the loft. He did not know how he got out on to the roof; it seemed to him that he lay below for a long time, gaz-

ing up through a gap at the paling sky and wondering how it was to be done, and then miraculously found himself where he wished to be. Then he got on his feet.

Then he saw them, the people in the street below. He had again forgotten they were there. So much the better; they should see him do it. Then he'd give a shout that should wake all Wales, and — and — by that time the pubs ought to be opening. . . .

But the little hand-staff of the flag was not long enough to please him. He wanted a longer one, to make more of a show. It took a whole tree to carry the flag over the Kursaal Dancing Rooms there. It was stupid of Tommy not to have thought of that — not to have brought one up from below, where there were plenty — yes, plenty —

As it happened, he did not need the stick. It all came about very softly and gently. He was standing up, again looking about for a longer stick, when once more his brain gave a wobble. The watchers below saw him lean, as formerly his chimney had leaned, only now Tommy Kerr leaned the other way —

And so gently did he come over, and so comparatively short a distance had he to fall, that you would have sworn it did not hurt him very much. He stuck to the little square of red calico at the end of the short staff; it was still in his hand when they picked him up from the heap of chimney-bricks that choked the little alley where the principal entrance to the Kursaal Gardens now is.

Ancient Mrs. Pritchard, when she heard of it, baa-ed, and said that folk came and went — came and went —

VI

THE GLYN

FROM sleeping badly, John Willie Garden had passed to sleeping hardly at all. From that same fear of startling her, he still did not appear in the Glyn much before his accustomed hour (though there had been times without number when he had resolved otherwise); instead, he wandered about, a mile, two miles away, sometimes setting himself a distant point to walk to, on his return from which it would surely be time he was seeking her. On the first two mornings of his absence from home he had not shaved; then he had decided that that would never do, and has sent somebody from the inn below to fetch him a bag. With the bag had come a short note from Minetta. It had merely said that June was leaving on the following Saturday, and that after that day she would be alone in the house.

He now wished he had not asked Minetta to show June that sketch. She had put it on his breakfast-plate for all the world as if *he* had wished to see it, instead of merely to show June how much better it was than the others. He didn't think that Minetta cared in the least how he spent his time, but she was so sharp, and queer as well as sharp. She watched things without taking any part in them. The more self-absorbed the actors showed themselves, the more keenly interested Minetta became. In many respects she took after her father. Edward Garden too had

that habit of poking and prying into people's tastes and enjoyments and passions and desires, noting and understanding them while remaining himself inaccessible to such weaknesses. It wouldn't greatly have surprised John Willie to learn that Minetta guessed what he was about up Delyn.

The curious thing was that, if that were so, he didn't think that Minetta would disapprove. She would look as it were over the tops of a pair of imaginary glasses, and under them, and finally through them, and her ironical glance would say as plainly as words, "This seems to be a love-affair." She would neither disapprove nor approve, or, if she did approve, it would be of his provision of entertainment for her. Her disapproval would appear only if John Willie involved her in something that would not "do."

This brought John Willie straightway back face to face with his old and torturing dilemma, of having something "on"—but something that would not "do."

A hundred times he had fought it out, and a hundred times he had come to the conclusion that, while Minetta might resemble her not quite human father, he, John Willie, was his mother's son. His mother would have been entirely for that "No" that a hundred times had gained the day. After each of these victories he had been on the point of turning his back on the mountains and of not returning as long as he knew her to be there. These impulses had now nothing to do with his fear of startling her. They were born of that stiff and indispensable code. He had only to thank her for a few breakfasts, to tell her he was going, to wish her well, and all would be over. He found rest in the thought. He might suffer an ache or two afterwards, but it would be the best way out. It had been his

first impulse, and it had proved to be his last conclusion. He would consider it settled so. It would be much the best course to act like an ordinary young man.

For several days he had said that.

He said it again on the morning when he shaved off half a week's growth of beard.

Once more he had slept within a stone's-throw of the hut. There had been light showers during the night, but hardly enough to call a break of the weather; the drops twinkled on fern and grass and spiders'-webs and tiny flowers, but the ground was still as dry as tinder. As he shaved, with the little mirror of his dressing-bag hung on a hazel, he reflected that it was only half-past seven, and that the Llyn ought to be a good colour for fishing. There would be plenty of time for a cast or two before saying good-bye. But his rod was in the locked hut, of which she had the key. No matter. Since he had now come to his decision, it would make no difference did he seek her in the Glyn a little earlier than usual. He would then be able to get away earlier in order to say good-bye to the neglected June.

He was heartily glad it was all over. The only possible course seemed so plain that he wondered now what he had been tormenting himself about all this time. Smiling a little, he even thought of all the awkwardnesses and dissimulations and machinations and deceits he was by one stroke escaping. He *would* have felt rather a brute had he come upon Dafydd Dafis one day, and asked him how he was getting on, and, casually, what had become of that little niece or cousin of his, whose name he would have had to make a lying pretence of having forgotten. It *would* have been behaving rather off-handedly to June, to see her for the first

two days only of her stay and then to let her go without as much as seeing her off. It *would* be better that Minetta should not have to write home saying that John Willie was away (fishing) and she alone in the house, but she was quite all right. It *would* be better to think of the things that would permanently "do"—altogether more comfortable and satisfactory not to have to call himself, in the waking hours of nights in the years ahead, or in the days to come when business claimed him, by a disquieting name. It was not as if there were not plenty of other things to think of. This particular aspect of life was far too much dwelt on. Percy Briggs dwelt on it too much, he himself had dwelt too much on it. He wasn't sure that he hadn't been getting even a little morbid about it. Not every lovely flower is picked because it is lovely and then thrown wilting away again. John Willie had come to his senses. It had taken him some time, but he was all right again now. He wondered how those people at the inn below had been looking after his horse. They'd probably let him get fat and lazy. Well, he would give him a twisting on the way home. Too much inaction is good for neither horse nor man. . . .

He finished shaving, and began to whistle as he packed his tackle and strapped the case. He would leave the case where it was, and pick it up on his way back. He would take the boat, pull straight across, get it over, and then have a swinging walk down to the inn. Despite his moping wanderings, he felt the need of a really good hard walk.

He strode down to the lake, unfastened the boat, dashed the waterdrops from the thwart with his cap, and pushed off.

It was a brilliant, if broken, sky. Up the mountain-

side the light mists were quickly evaporating, and a great crag of dazzling white cloud, shaped like the north of Scotland on a map, was perfectly reduplicated in the glassy Llyn. As if the surface of the water had had a tenuity without abating a jot of its crystal clearness, the smooth V from the bows seemed to shear through something that, even when the water settled to rest again, did not return; there fled at each stroke an intact perfection. He altered the boat's course, and the reflection of the edge of Delyn broke into long smooth stripes. He altered it again, and an invisible comb seemed to pass through the towering inverted cloud. His wake was a dancing of broken glittering facets. He stood in towards the shaly spur; a few more strong strokes and he grounded abruptly; and he gathered up his boots and stockings from the bottom of the boat, stepped out, and made fast at the bottom of the Glyn.

The showers had swollen the stream a little, and mossy stones that had been dry the day before were lapped by the water, and pools came farther up his calf. But suddenly at a thought he stopped. In the new circumstances it was a new thought. She did not expect him for some hours yet; it might be better — in case of his coming upon her as she might not wish to be come upon — to give a call. On second thoughts he was sure that he ought to give a call. He opened his mouth —

But it was not necessary. Suddenly he saw her twenty yards ahead. She had probably been up for hours, and had got her bathe over long since.

But even that glimpse of her through the leaves had been as it were two glimpses. In the first of them he had seen that she was there; in the second he had noted

that her appearance was not her usual appearance. She was no longer wearing the black dress of Philip Lacey's flower-shop, but that old blouse, unconfined at the waist, and again, as on that day when she had started back from the door of the hut, her legs and feet were bare. Four trout lay on the grass beside her, one of them still fluttering. She was stroking the drops of water from her forearms, and wiping her hands on her old striped petticoat.

He did not call, but all in a moment she looked round as quickly as if he had done so. At first he thought she was going to start to her feet and run, but she remained seated. Then a bough intervened. He put it aside behind him, threw his boots and stockings ashore, and climbed the bank.

"Hallo, Ynys," he said, as he sat down beside her. "I'm a bit early, but I've got to get off soon. They want me down there. There are some people I must see before they go."

Then he wondered whether, after all, he had not startled her. In her eyes was once more that look that had been there that other day, when she had fallen back, though no farther than a cat falls back. If that was so he must reassure her by going on talking. Without pausing, he continued.

"Yes, I shall have to get off by eleven. I've not been home, you see. Couldn't stand going back to that place, so I just made myself comfortable by the hut there.—I say, I hope you didn't get wet with that rain in the night?"

Simply, freely, naturally, and without a second thought, he put out his hand to feel whether her petticoat was dry. He supposed she slept in her petticoat,

and that his early visit had not allowed her time to change.

But she crouched back so swiftly that he also fell a little back, surprised. He forgot that his own words, "I'm a bit early," raised twenty questions — questions of why he was there at all, of how it had come to pass that a variation in his habit was a thing to be remarked on, of why his announcement that he must be off early seemed even to himself a breach of something that had never been established, but only tacitly allowed. He forgot these things, stared at her, and suddenly exclaimed, "Why, what's the matter?" Had she feared that he was about to put his hand upon her? One of her elbows had shot up as if she would have defended herself, and the frightened seaweed eyes looked at him over the guarding forearm. Her other hand, behind her on the grass, supported her. So they sat, she trembling, he covering her with an astonished stare.

Then, as quickly as she had raised it, she dropped the defending arm. She made a swift clutch at her petticoats and scrambled a foot farther away from him. Her breast fluttered like that of the still living trout, and her hand was clasped betrayingly about one foot hidden in the short striped petticoat.

And in a twink John Willie saw his mistake. It was not from his advanced hand that she had shrunk. It was from the resting of his eyes — those eyes that, even as she had drawn herself back, had already rested. Those eyes, of Scandinavian blue, had sought hers again, of the wet greenish brown of the seaweed of the shore.

He spoke quietly.

"Come here, Ynys," he said.

She did not move.

"Come here, Ynys," he said again.

Her trembling became violent.

"Come here, Ynys — I want ——"

He did not finish. His hand shot quickly forth. The next moment it held what she had striven to hide. He was gazing at the silver mark that ran round the outer edge of her foot near the little toe as a vein runs round a pebble.

She had twisted her body so that her face lay on the grass, covered with her hands. She made one feeble movement to draw the foot from his hand, and then lay still. When, presently, he put it gently down, she made no further attempt to hide it; what was the good, since he had seen? It lay still now, a little crinkled brown sole with bits of vegetation pressed into it, and, running across it, that old thread, silver, like the wedding-ring of her mother — that hard little sole that had made the kidney-shaped footprints on the Llanyglo beach, that had pattered after pedestrians on the road, and that would take to the roads again rather than be pressed into a shoe and walk the pavements of a town.

Yet, though he had seen the foot, she seemed determined he should not see her face too. Presently she was conscious that he was trying to do so, that he was gently trying to draw away the concealing hands. That she resisted. "Ynys! Ynys!" he was saying remorsefully in her ear. She lay quite still, and "Ynys! Ynys!" he continued to repeat, over and over again.

At last he heard that uniquely soft voice of hers in reply. She spoke into the grass, not sobbingly, only a little dully.

"I 'ould not show you," she begged him — movingly begged him — to believe.

“Ynys — dear! ——”

“Indeed you ask me, one day, if I take off my boots and stock-kings, and I ’ould not ——”

“No, no ——” he soothed her.

“I not show nobody, in lot-t of years, never.” She turned her face to him for a moment; the anger of a fury lurked there for him had he not believed her. “I not show nobody, if they kill me,” she went on. “Lot-t of years I *hate* it ——” the vindictiveness of the single word died away, and he scarcely heard what came next, “— but I not hate it any more now ——”

His answer was to rise suddenly to his knees, to stoop again, and to kiss the foot he had innocently maimed. He was conscious as he did so of its quick little pressure against his mouth. . . .

The next moment his arm was about her shoulder, and he was gently seeking to see her face again.

“Cariad!” he murmured, his lips to her ear.

And he knew that by no other means could it have come to pass. “Lot-t of years I hate it — but I not hate it any more.” She had hated the foot for its disfigurement. She had loved it for him.

There was no question of Yes or No as they ate their breakfast together; it was as it was, and neither guilt nor innocence had any part in it. From time to time, as they sat, he flung his arms about her shoulders as frankly as children embrace, and she suffered the crushing with lips parted and eyes immeasurably far away. The black pool was flecked with froth; it danced over the whitey-green ebullition at the foot of the swollen fall; and two dragon-flies, one blue as a scarab and the other like a darting twig of green metal, hovered and set and spun. There seemed to be no wind, but the great country of white cloud up aloft had advanced,

and a soft gloom filled the Glyn. They did not wash up; impatiently John Willie tossed the platter they had shared aside; and they embraced again.

Middy did not find John Willie on his way to Llanyglo, nor yet did he see June off by the three o'clock train. By three o'clock he was on the summit of Delyn again, under the same rock where he had tried, as if by accident, to touch her hand. She had put on her shoes, but not her stockings, for the climb, but he had drawn them off again, and once more she lay, luxuriating with her foot under his hand. Even now she did not talk very much. She had only one thing to say, with lovely monotony and very few words to say it in; she strayed no farther from her little store of English than to say, over and over again, "Boy bach!" with the greenish-brown eyes slavishly on his, and her parted lips hurrying out the diminutive before he crushed them again. She started from her dream once, as a stray sheep close behind them gave a call like a rich oboe; then she relapsed into it again. The shadows lay still and leagues long over the rumple of mountains, and she had not changed, and had promised that she would not again change, that unfastened bodice and short and faded old petticoat.

So June steamed away, while Ynys's face was framed in John Willie's arm on the summit of Delyn.

They descended to the Glyn again between the afternoon and the early evening, and with each step as they dropped down the mountain a silence grew and deepened on them. He knew its meaning, if she did not, and, back by the pool again, he first cleaned the forgotten platter (which she tried to prevent), and then stood before her as he had stood when once, with an abrupt, "Nos da," he had stridden away. And in that pause

of gazing silence he knew how much was packed — his Yes, his No, hers too; all that lay behind them, all that lay before. For him, there lay enwrapped in it that slight black figure he had seen under the crimson pier-light; his searching for her; his finding her; his struggles, his decision, and then, even in the act of his relinquishment, his wonderful recovery of her. And her memory took a farther flight still. She saw herself, a little girl, sitting with a bandaged foot upon a chair, while a testy girl not two years older than herself drew her likeness. She remembered the unendurable length of those half-hours — unendurable, save that occasionally there looked in at the door or passed the window a cowslip-haired boy, with hard blue eyes that would stare down even his own conscience and none be the wiser, a conquering boy, of a race so habituated to conquest that it takes with the sword-hand and carelessly tosses twice as much back with the other. That was what it meant to her, that silver mark that ran round the edge of her foot as a vein runs round the edge of a pebble. . . .

And for the future? His future might be anything, but hers could be one thing only. For the gipsy loves never but the once. In all but love, the waters of the world are not more unstable than she; in love, the rocks are not more irremovable. Therefore she has no past and no regrets. She has no regrets, for there is no scar upon her heart — how can there be a scar, when a scar is a healing, and this wound is never healed, but ever new, ever quivering? And she has no past — how can she have a past when all is a poignant and lovely present, that endures to the end? . . .

There was so little for John Willie to do. He had only to go away without kissing her again.

Kiss her, however, he must not — he was only an ordinary young man ——

He knew it, and ——

He passed his arms about her waist and drew her down by his side.

It was dark in the Glyn long before the light had faded from the open hillside above. In Llyn Delyn not a fish rose to break that dark and intact perfection. The fall into the pool diminished a little in volume, and mossy cushions that had lately been covered began to rise out of the water again. And a heart was laid quiveringly open where formerly only a foot had been maimed. She was twice conquered, for she was Welsh and woman too. In the hearts of the men of her race the fame of their story still lives, and while it lives strife will not cease. As their own proverb says, what the sword took, the tongue will take back again.

But the woman goes with the land.

PART FIVE

I

THE WHEEL

IT was a summer nightfall in the Kursaal Gardens. The turnstiles of the new Main Entrance in Pontnewydd Street revolved ceaselessly, with a noise as of an unending rack and pinion. The lightly clad merry-makers poured under the trees that had electric globes for fruit; they moved towards the cream-coloured buildings that, with their illuminations, seemed no more than footlights to the solemn stage of the immeasurable blue beyond. Most of them were going to that Dancing-Hall where all the youths and maidens of the world seemed to dance together; the others hurried to keep appointments, to sit at the little tables where the waiters moved on the grass, to join the slowly moving circle about the bandstand, or to see the side-shows. The band played the "Lohengrin" Prelude; the soft sound of gravel crunching underfoot mingled with the music; and the great lighted circle of the Big Wheel rose against the sky.

In the topmost coach of the Wheel sat John Willie Garden and June Lacey. They were alone in the bright upholstered compartment. June wore her Juniest frock and an engagement ring; John Willie, who had been walking, was in cap and knickers. They had been engaged since the Spring, and everybody had said

how splendidly it would "do." They had played together (everybody had said) since childhood, knew exactly what to expect and what not to expect of one another, had (as they put it) the solid cake to cut at when the sugar and the almond-paste had begun to pall, and what could have been more romantic?

"They'd be hard put to it to think of anything they're short of," everybody had said.

From the windows of the car they could see the whole of Llanyglo. With the turning of the Wheel they had watched its lights rise slowly over the intervening roofs, and then slowly sink away again. Now, to see the grounds below, they had to step to the windows and to look almost vertically down, through the intricacy of girders and lattice and mammoth supporting piers.

"It takes about twenty minutes to go round, doesn't it?" June asked.

"About that," John Willie replied absently.

"Look at the Trwyn light!"

"Yes, dear."

"We aren't as high as that, are we?"

"Oh dear no."

"I suppose we've stopped to take more passengers up?"

"I expect so."

Then, after a pause, June said, "Do you know, dear, I think I've finally decided about the drawing-room. I think I shall have it all white — every bit ——"

From her white gloves to her gypsophylla petticoats, she was a girl any young man would have been glad to spend his shillings on, and her house was going to be as smart and complete as herself. Her father was coming down very handsomely for her wedding, and in addition to his other gifts, was going to lay out the gardens

and the greenhouse for them. Counting her silver, tapping her flower-pots to see which was in need of water, trimming bits of raffia with her scissors and putting drops of gum into her geraniums, June would be exactly in her right place. She was already attending a Cookery Class, and had all her household linen marked. And already they were promised any number of presents. "Presents are so useful," she had said to John Willie, "because then you have them, and so often they're the kind of thing you'd put off buying for yourself." It was all going to "do" very splendidly.

"I say," said John Willie by and by, "we don't seem to be moving."

"The Wheel?" June asked.

"Yes. But it will go on in a minute, I expect."

"I hope it won't stop long," June replied.

John Willie also hoped it would not stop long, but for the life of him he couldn't have told you why he hoped so. Indeed he tried to smother the hope. He tried to smother it because he had an obscure feeling that — that — well, if a reason can smile, that his reason for not wishing to stay up there too long was quietly smiling at him. It seemed to tell him that he and everything about him were enviably all right — safe — thoroughly and entirely comfortable — need have no fears for the future — and that all would continue to be just as comfortable and safe and altogether all right until he should come to die, in a best bed, with eiderdowns, and frilled pillow-cases, and hot bottles, and the certainty of a handsomely appointed funeral a few days later. Few were as sure of their future as that. John Willie was one of the lucky ones. . . .

He moved, not to the windows from which he could

look down on the lights of the Promenade and Pier, but to those that were turned to the dark and unseen mountains. Somehow this reason he had for hoping that the car would not stop long seemed to come from there. He told himself that he would be better presently. He had these — bad humours, call them — sometimes. He hid them from June, but Minetta had noticed them, and he knew all about them himself. He turned to June again.

“I wonder what’s happened,” he said.

“It’s — it’s quite safe, isn’t it?” June asked.

“Oh, quite.” His lips compressed a little. It was quite safe — neither more nor less safe than everything else in John Willie’s life. That, somehow, was at the bottom of these ill-humours of his.

“Dash it,” he muttered. . . .

“It is a nuisance,” June agreed. “But I don’t suppose Minetta will be anxious.”

“I wasn’t thinking of Minetta,” John Willie replied.

Now when you are reluctant to enter into explanation, and there is something you badly want to do, you never (if you are an ordinary young man) look very far for a reason. The first that comes will serve your turn. If it is a flimsy one, no matter; you then get angry when its flimsiness is pointed out to you, and presently out of your anger and obstinacy you will have found a reason as good as another. John Willie did not at all like those interior smiling taunts of himself that took the form of congratulations on his neatly planned life and pillowed and feathered death to close it. If anybody of his own weight had taunted him thus he would have knocked that person down. But you cannot knock down a whisper that seems to come

on the wind from the mountains through the night, making you, your ordered comfort notwithstanding, absolutely wretched. Again John Willie turned to June.

"I say, June; this won't do, you know," he said.

June looked enquiringly at him.

"But we can't do anything but wait, dear, can we?"

He did not answer.

They waited. Half an hour passed. Then John Willie muttered again that, among so many other things that would "do" beautifully, this particular thing would not "do." June coloured a little.

"But — but — it isn't our fault," she murmured, picking at the fingers of her gloves.

He saw she understood. Again they waited.

Then, suddenly, John Willie came shortly out with that reason that must serve in the stead of his real reason. He knew how lame it was. A score or two of other young couples were in precisely the same situation as they, and more that cheerfully resigned to their plight; but then they were not being goaded and taunted as John Willie was being goaded and taunted. They were not being told that their paths lay, so to speak, on flowers, while the paths of others were the stony road, that cut and blistered the foot, and tired the eyes, and bowed the back (but had no power, perhaps, thus to reproach the heart). . . . Anyway, John Willie was not disposed to stand it.

"June," he said abruptly, "I can't stay up here all night with you."

Her wail interrupted him.—"Oh-h-h! ——"

"It wouldn't do."

"Oh-h-h — it isn't our fault ——"

“No, but that can't be helped. The woman I marry ——”

“Oh-h-h — but there isn't anything to do!”

“Oh, yes there is. We needn't be together. I can get into another car or something. It will only be like walking along the footboard of a train.”

She gave a little shriek.—“Oh — if you do I shall throw myself out — I know I shall! ——”

“You won't do anything so silly. Get up, dear; I've quite made up my mind. I tell you it wouldn't do. The woman I marry . . .”

With gentle force he picked her up and set her on the seat of the car. Then he approached the window. There was a bar across it, which it took him a minute to bend, but the chances were that where his head would pass the rest of his body might follow. June hid her face and moaned as he took off his coat; then he kissed her and thrust his head under the bar. He wriggled through, stood on the footboard, smiled again grimly through the window, and then looked down.

At any rate, he had given a reason of sorts.

Then he looked up.

Instantly he saw that, unless head or wrist or finger should unexpectedly fail him, the most dangerous part of his exploit lay at the very beginning. There was no descent from the step on which he stood. The cars were slung from axles, and in order to get to the rim that held the axles themselves he must climb to the roof of the coach. He glanced at the roof of the coach twenty feet below and to his left. He saw that it had a curved rain-sill like that of the top of a railway carriage. Good; the coaches would be all alike. He set his knees in the window-frame once more. June was still lying with her face hidden on the seat. His fin-

gers felt blindly for the rain-sill; they found it, and he moistened his other hand. He wished he could have glued it, for for some moments mere friction must be half his support. For an instant he thought calmly and abysmally; then he risked it. . . .

It succeeded. He knelt on the roof, holding the sling and coupling that hung from the car-axle overhead. He glanced up at the axle to which he must swarm. The singing in the cars continued, and a babble of sound rose lightly from below. Evidently he had not been seen to get out of the car.

But then, who would have thought of looking?

It was as he swarmed up the coupling that there first came over him the sense of the difference between the reason he had given, and the real reason that had brought him out from that brightly lighted and cushioned car in which he might far more easily have stopped. And the realisation of that difference brought with it, very strangely, the sense, not of bodily peril, but of inner peace. It was unaccountable, but there it was, not to be argued about. The only thing that disturbed this peace, and that but lightly, was that his venture had not a more profitable object. Folk did less dangerous things for far better reason — to save life, or property, or something else worth while. But this neck-risking of his was — could only be — bravado. He knew perfectly well that in the circumstances nobody would have thought a penny the worse of June. "The woman I marry ——" he had known that to be an hypocrisy even when he had said it. No, he was merely idiotically showing-off, and that peace at his heart would presently prove to be an illusion. . . .

It was quite suddenly, as he lay out along the

Wheel's topmost car-axle, that the thought of Ynys came to him. He didn't know why it should come at that moment, unless it was born of his bodily isolation on the very top of that immense bracelet hung with trinkets of cars. But perhaps it was that; perhaps there was a connection, if only an idle and fanciful one. Save perhaps the keeper of the Trwyn light, nobody in Llanyglo was nearer the stars than he that night; and only Mynedd Mawr had been higher than he when he had lain on the rocky head of Delyn. . . .

Or was it, not the isolation of his body at all, but his isolation of soul, that had brought that mysterious and inexplicable and probably fallacious peace?

While not ceasing to keep his carefully calculating eyes open, and every motor-fold of his brain intent on the preservation of his balance, he began to think of Delyn.

He had stayed many days up there; some weeks perhaps; he couldn't have told you how long. Its rain had soaked him, and its winds dried him again; its streams had fed him and its herbage furnished his litter at night; but the sun itself had not warmed him more than had her impulsive looks and surrendering gestures when he had but lifted up a hand. With another eye than that that now measured the distances between girders and axles and ties, he seemed to see the rocks again, and the lake shining in its morning intactness, and the drowned bubbles of the fall in the Glyn, and the thin wind stroking the short grass, and the mountain-ashes under which they had sat, their leaves like fingerprints against the sky. He could see again the trout she had cooked for him — her breast had fluttered as those dying silvery things had fluttered, silvery as that dry old scar he had kissed. He could smell the smoke

of her morning fire again, her hair, her breast. . . . And he could hear again the shrill warning note in that unique voice of hers that had first set him wondering whether, after all, it would "do." . . .

That quarrel had not been on that heart-breaking morning of their parting. There had been no quarrel then. No; it had been at something unguarded he had said about his sister and her friends. Yes, he saw again the insensate jealous flame in those seaweed eyes, and heard the ugly passionate cracking of the voice in which she had cried, "They noth-thing, your fine miss-es! They mar-ry house without a man if they could — they take house in their arms — they make those eyes at house, and kiss house, and call it cariad! You no dif-ferent from them! You go to your miss and say, 'I have house' — she want-t you then! ——" It had taken a whole morning before he had had her, humble and sobbing and remorseful and enslaved, in his arms again. . . . No, it wouldn't have done to marry a temper like that — and, temper altogether apart, it wouldn't have done. There are only a few years of this world and its companionships, and, though your friends may have their twists and crankinesses, they are still your friends, all you are likely to have. Better be in the stream with them while you are here. He would only have been sorry for it later, on her account as well as on his own. She had been quicker to see that than he, and had spoken of it in her soft and halting English. At first he had laughed and said "Kiss me" . . . but she had been right. . . .

But John Willie, with a Wheel to descend, must not let these things take him too far from the business in hand.

He had reached a chain in a great guiding sprocket,

but he thought of what at any moment a hand upon a lever in the power-house far below might do, and of one of his father's men who had once been carried round shafting. No moving parts for him. . . . He looked down through an iron-framed lozenge at the people below. The grounds resembled a tray of many-coloured moving beads. All Llanyglo seemed to have run to see the stopped Wheel. Probably the Pier itself was half empty. If so, all the more room for anybody who wanted to watch, not a Wheel, but the moon lift her gilded sacrificial horn out of the sea. . . . There had been far too much drub-drub-drubbing. John Willie was weary of it. It was time he settled down. And Llanyglo itself seemed to have come to much the same conclusion. It had begun to make a restriction here and a regulation there, as if it wished to purge itself of its evil name. There was no doubt that for a time it had been a very sinful place, and . . . (here John Willie, with a slow steady pull, hoisted himself to where he wished to be, on the long curved upper plate of a massive H, rivet-studded like a boiler, that was knitted with iron lace to other H's — John Willie must not venture too far down that slope unless he should suddenly acquire a fly's faculty for walking upside-down) . . . and perhaps the town had begun to get a little frightened, as sinful people, and perhaps sinful towns also, sometimes do. But that would be all right presently. Llanyglo was going, in a manner of speaking, to be married. It was turning over, had turned over, a new leaf. Soon it would be a churlish thing to reproach it for a past that it had lived down; it was becoming sadder and wiser, and better able to distinguish between the things that would "do" and the things that would not. The less talk . . . (here

John Willie began to realise that he was not a fly, and to collect his nerves for the turn-over to the under side of that H that a few yards away dropped over, with a little gleam, into nothing) . . . the less talk the soonest mended. He did not intend to say — anything — to June. Indeed he intended . . . (there: that was rather a jerk to his shoulder socket, but he was safely underneath) . . . indeed he intended that his attitude to June about such matters should be rather severe. This was not because June's own thoughts were in the least degree lax (she erred, if anywhere, on the prudish side), but because women were very tender things. A whisper was fatal to them. That was why John Willie was clinging now to that enormous piece of knitting of iron and upholstered carriages and electric light. He had climbed out in order that nobody should be able to say, after that, that . . .

Then it was that he knew, once and for ever, that this was a lie. Then it was that he knew that he was not where he was, suspended between the stars of heaven and the lamps of earth, on June's account. He was there because a gipsy girl had called him. This was his service, not of the pretty and pleasant June he was presently going to marry, but of one whom he had not married, of one he had not feared to compromise, of one who had known nothing, cared nothing, save that she had been lost in a wild and tender and beautiful love. She, none other, had called him —

Then, too, it was that there rose to him from below a faint yet high and shuddering "A-a-ah!" that was followed by a sudden cessation of all sound whatever save only a distant throb and pulsing in the Dancing-Hall. It surprised him for a moment; then he remembered. Of course. He had been seen —

She, none other, had called him, and he knew now that so she would continue to call him, wherever he might be — from his labour by day and from his rest by night, from his laughter with his children and his clasping of his wife. She would continue to call him until softness and ease should have done their slow and fatal work, would continue to call him until that nerve, with her harping on it, should have become dull. . . .

He seemed to hear the echoes of that voiceless calling, diminishing through the years to come. They would end in a silence that his wife's innocent garrulity would never, never be able to break —

The faint throb in the Dancing-Hall also ceased. The Kursaal Gardens were a bead mat of faces. There was not a whisper. Delyn was not stiller.

Unconscious that already he was black and torn and bleeding, he looked down from his girder upon the bead mat. He knew what, presently, if he came down alive, every bead there would be singing — his daring and his quixotry and his devotion, and the possession by June of a husband who would do this rather than suffer the lightest breath upon the mirror of her name —

He looked at them as he clung, scarce bigger than a speck, high in that webbed diadem of the Wheel —

And as he hung there, with only the guardian of the Trwyn light higher than he, and the rest of the descent still to make, he still could not decide, of the two things that oppressed his heart, which was the atonement and which the sin.

II

ADIEU

“**Y**OU'RE leaving Llanyglo? Well, holidays must come to an end.—You'd like another walk up the Trwyn? Very well; but you've seen all there is to see. . . .

“Here we are. . . . What's going on at the Light? Oh, that's the Board of Trade, experimenting with some new fog apparatus or other. By the way, the Light people are rather sore because of a new Regulation, that they mustn't have lodgers at the farm; and also because they'd like to grow roses up the look-out wall, and that's prohibited too; I suppose the authorities think they'd be spending the day looking at the roses instead of at the ships. They've moved the rocket apparatus farther along the coast; they found it wasn't much use here, and it's turned out very successfully at Abercelyn.—Eh? Yes, where the manganese comes from. They still get a certain quantity, but there's peace in the Balkans or wherever it is for the moment, so nobody's growing very rich out of the mines here. . . .

“Hallo, that's rather a coincidence. Don't look round too quickly. You see that tallish man over there? I don't suppose you've even seen him before; as a matter of fact he hasn't been — er — to be seen. He got into trouble once; in plain English, they put him in prison. His name's Armfield, and his trouble

was all about Llanyglo. Awkward things, meetings like these. I think Armfield's a capital chap, and I should like to go and talk to him; but prison's a cruel thing, and you never know how the poor fellow himself feels about it. . . . Ah! As I thought, he looks rather broken. If you don't mind we won't watch him. Come on to the Dinas and have a smoke. . . .

"How's John Willie Garden? Perfectly rosy, if beginning to get a bit fat. Lucky dog! Four children, two boys and two girls, quite an amiable chatter-box of a wife, and rich enough to buy almost anything he wants. Lucky, lucky dog! — Did I tell you he was the adopted Conservative Free Trade candidate for one of the Manchester divisions? Not that he cares a snap about Free Trade politically; economically it merely happens to be a good part of his bread and butter; but then you have to be careful about what you say on platforms, and so John Willie talks like the editor of the *Spectator* himself. June Garden runs her two houses, one here and one in Manchester, like clockwork, and they go backwards and forwards between them in a really regal car. Every tramp and gipsy on the road knows that car. However fast he's driving, John Willie always pulls up and gives them a shilling. Just a foible of his. We all have 'em in one shape or form.

"Llanyglo's going in heartily for these new proposals for advertising the town out of the rates. A young man called Ithel Williams is very keen on it; he's a son of Tudor Williams, the Tudor Williams who used to be M.P. for this division. Young Ithel's got rather a nice billet here, as Librarian or something for the Council, and if this new thing goes through he'll be quite in clover.—Jobbery? Well, I suppose that's the name

for it, but personally I'm not altogether against it. It seems to me that the only alternative is putting these berths up for competitive examination, which in my opinion's failed all along the line, so find the right man and then job him in, I say.—The right man's so frequently a relative? Well . . . there you are. That is the weak spot. But there's always a crab somewhere. . . .

“ I wonder if Armfield's gone yet? Let's have a look. . . . No, he's still there. . . .

“ A good season? Yes, from all accounts it's been a very good season. There have been better from the purely money point of view, I should say, but after all everybody can't be everything, and every place can't get all there is. Llanyglo, like other places, has its natural limits of expansion. I don't think it will get any bigger yet awhile. There's no doubt the Wakes people were the people who flung the money about, and they've a little fallen off; but even if Llanyglo has to write down some of its obligations it will probably gain in the long run. A section of the Council's coming to see that, and is pressing for reconstruction (that's always rather wonderful to me, that they should construct things of solid materials and then reconstruct them by saying they cost less than they did); but that's the Council's business, or rather the powers behind the Council. Edward Garden isn't one of these any longer, at any rate not to the extent he was. He sits in Manchester and makes towns in Canada now. But he still looks at letters under his glasses, and over them, and backwards and forwards and upside down, and then looks mildly up at you and says the letter seems to be a letter. . . .

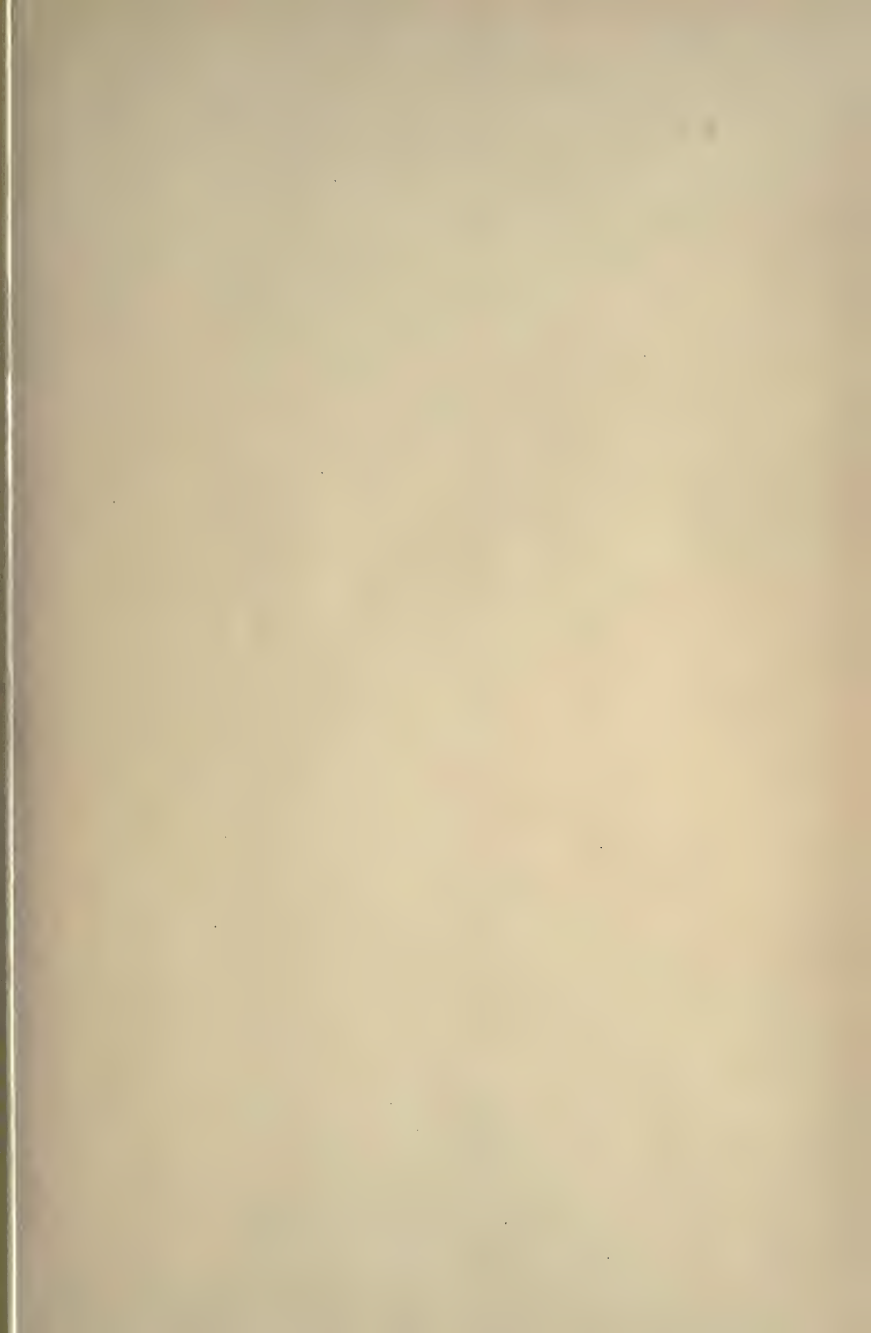
“A last look at the place: there you are: bay, Promenade, Pier, the ring of mountains behind. It grew from a few fishermen’s huts to over-capitalisation in a very few years. And there’s Terry Armfield, still looking at it all, like a not very old Rip Van Winkle. I wonder what he’s thinking! I suppose he couldn’t keep away, but must come and remember it as it was and dream over it again as it was never, never to be. . . . Walk past quickly; he’s sobbing, poor chap. His dream was of a place — I don’t know how to describe it — all friendliness and loveliness and graciousness, fowl and flesh and good red-herring all in one, so to speak, what you might call a diaphanous sort of place, a jolly place to think of during those few minutes of the morning or evening when you’re not quite asleep and not quite awake, but — hm! — I’m not so sure . . . not in this imperfect world. . . .

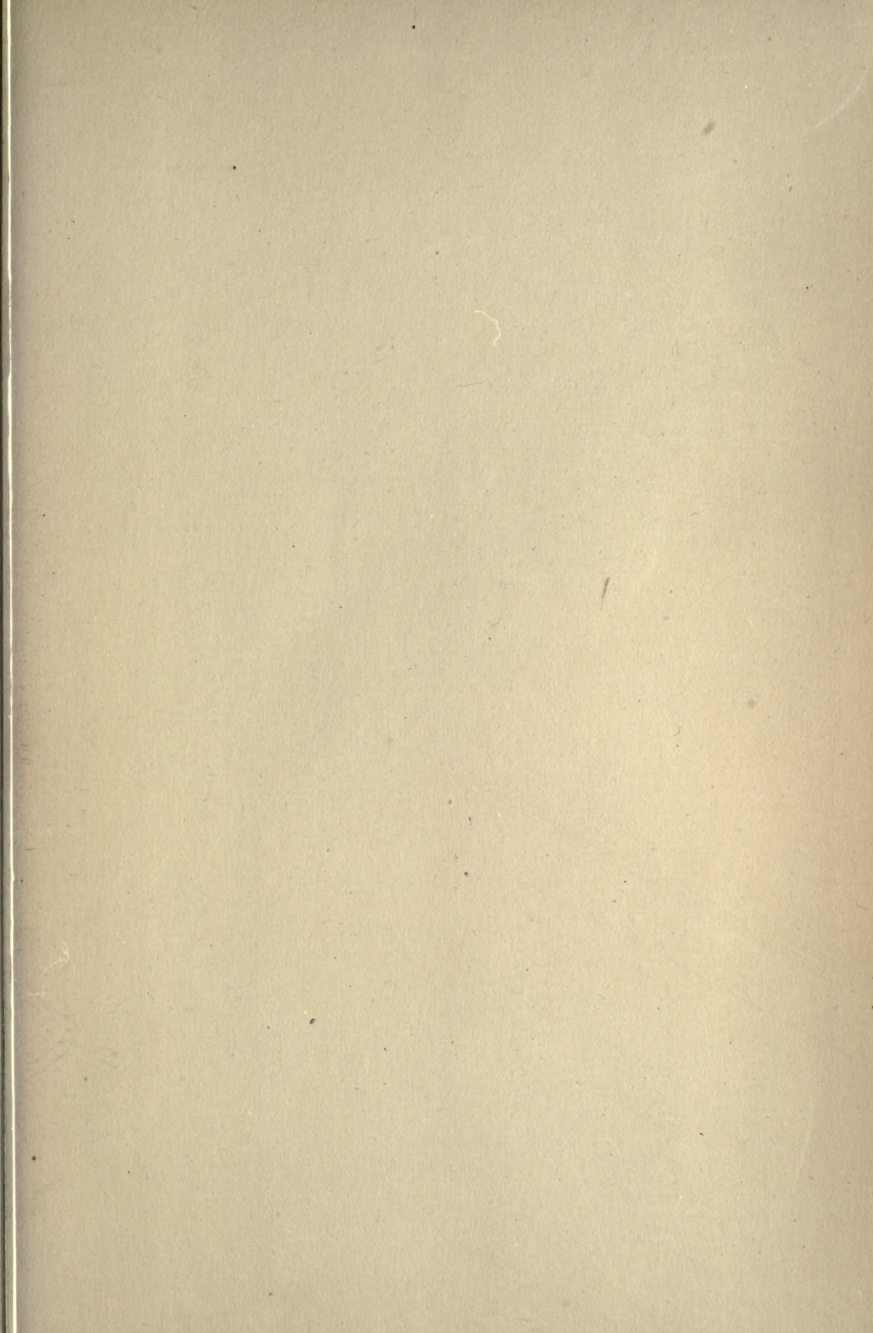
“Anyway, that down there is what he sees. . . .

“I suppose the other wouldn’t have done. . . .

“Shall we go?”

THE END







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